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**From Phraseology to Reality: A “Theological Geography”**

**Bonhoeffer’s Early Travels and  
the Notion of the Boundary**

**by  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "turning from the phraseological to the real" during his early journeys abroad as recorded in his diary notes and letters. Our interest in the maps and stories of travels operative in Bonhoeffer's life coincides with a prevalence of metaphors of travel and displacement in contemporary literary and cultural criticism and acknowledges the movements of "powerful" travellers across boundaries and continents in the context of imperialism and colonialism. Bonhoeffer's travels punctuate a life of restless movements and unceasing interest in other cultures. They take us on a journey of exploration into "contact zones", those social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other. At the same time Bonhoeffer's crossings of territorial and socio-political borders prove to go hand in hand with a strong theological concern for genuine encounter and sociality, highlighting in particular the importance of the notion of the boundary. Bonhoeffer's early theological writings provide us, hence, with a powerful theological rationale for the need of genuine experiences of the boundary in encounters with the reality of the cultural Other. In fact, what can be demonstrated is a fascinating interrelationship of his travels and his theological formation, whereby his travel writings are shown to pre- or postlude his theological writings illustrating the importance of genuine encounters with the Other for "turning from the phraseological to the real". His early journeys portray in this sense the embodiment of his life long quest for reality and encourage us to "earth" our own theological endeavours in the complex realm of cultural politics.

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## **Preface**

I have kept German quotations and references in German, for the simple reason that there is always something lost in translation. Only in those places where the German original of some of the key terms would have significantly disrupted the flow of the reading have I chosen to translate them. The literature survey on Bonhoeffer's turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" is not crucial to the argument and does not therefore form part of the body of the thesis, but is added as an Appendix. Nonetheless it helps to situate our thesis within the wider context of Bonhoeffer studies and thereby highlights the particular contribution my thesis attempts to make. In the introduction I provide the reader with a short summary of the insights gleaned from the survey and how these have encouraged my studying Bonhoeffer's early journeys. My thesis focuses on Bonhoeffer's early journeys, which are associated with his early theology period. His stay in London from 1933 to 1935 falls outside this period in the *Kirchenkampf* or middle period of his theological development, and is therefore not included. Yet we may take note of the fact that in some respects his encounter with England is mediation between Germany and the "brave new world", between Catholicism and Protestantism (Anglicanism) that prepares him for his new vocation at Finkenwalde in a way that complements his earlier experiences, giving them now a new spiritual depth. I have also not included his short trips abroad in the early 1930s which formed part of his ecumenical witness for peace and represented an outflow of his American experience. His trip to Cambridge in the summer of 1931, where he was invited as a German youth delegate to the conference of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, marked the beginning of his growing involvement in the ecumenical movement. His participation took him to England, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland with the high point being the conference at Fanø in Denmark in 1934. My discussion of his ongoing dream to visit India, in contrast, moves well beyond his early theology period in order to capture the whole range of motives for his desire to travel East.

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## **From Phraseology to Reality: A "Theological Geography"**

### **Bonhoeffer's early travels and the notion of the boundary**

*"Travel is almost as important as study for the making of a theologian."<sup>1</sup>*

#### **Introduction: Bonhoeffer's Theology "on Route"**

Ich habe mich, glaube ich, nie sehr geändert, höchstens in der Zeit meiner ersten Auslandseindrücke und unter dem ersten bewußten Eindruck von Papas Persönlichkeit. Damals ist eine Abkehr vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen erfolgt.<sup>2</sup>

Bonhoeffer wrote these words from prison to his close friend Bethge on 22 April 1944. Reflecting on the impact of his imprisonment up to this point he doubts if he has changed much, though he reckons to have still learned a lot. The only major change in his life is said to have occurred under the impact of his early travels abroad and the extraordinary impression his father's personality made on him. This remark is the starting point of my analysis prompting me to consider a range of questions: What does Bonhoeffer mean by this turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen"? In what ways is this turning reflected in his early travel writings? Why is the turning linked to his encounters with the cultural "other"? What is the connection between the influence of the father and the early travels? And finally how does this turning relate to his early theological formation?

The importance Bonhoeffer attaches to his early travel encounters in shaping his life and thought is also evident in a birthday letter written to Max Diestel 1942. There Bonhoeffer recognises especially the intercultural experiences of the years 1928 to 1931 as having been "grundlegend für mein ganzes Leben und meine Lebensgestaltung."<sup>3</sup> Bonhoeffer thanks Diestel for his involvement in making those experiences possible, which Bonhoeffer describes as having been "die entscheidenden Anstöße in meinem äußeren,

beruflichen und persönlichen Leben ...”<sup>4</sup> The significance Bonhoeffer attributes to his intercultural experiences resonates with Robert Ericksen’s argument in *Theologians Under Hitler*. In his introduction he compares Bonhoeffer amongst others to the German theologians Kittel, Althaus, and Hirsch. Ericksen challenges previous lines of argumentation when he concludes: ‘We must ... acknowledge that neither rationalism, intellectual capacity nor Christian values protected Kittel, Althaus or Hirsch from supporting Hitler. This is a disturbing conclusion and one which requires careful consideration if we desire the Hitler phenomenon not to recur.’<sup>5</sup> In search for clues to a “Hitler-proof” theology Ericksen maintains:

In the end arbitrary factors of background and environment may explain the political stance of these individuals more effectively than do their intellectual positions. ... Bonhoeffer had both an English family tie and international living experiences to give him a cosmopolitan outlook on life. ... Kittel, Althaus and Hirsch, by contrast, grew up in conservative, patriotic families in which ties to some broader perspective were minimal.<sup>6</sup>

The importance of Bonhoeffer’s cosmopolitan outlook on life is also emphasized in Josiah Young’s understanding of Bonhoeffer’s witness as “a denunciation of the racism that threatens to sabotage the possibilities for life together in the next century.”<sup>7</sup> Looking in particular at Bonhoeffer’s association with African Americans, Young suggests that “Bonhoeffer tried to embrace, rather than to totalize, in the sense of reject, otherness – alterity.”<sup>8</sup> Young therefore rightly asks: “Why give only lip service to Bonhoeffer’s love of Negro spirituals, to his unusualness in wanting to study with Gandhi, to his diehard resistance to Aryan-ism (meaning nazism)? Why not investigate what all of these mean in making them the angle of vision in Bonhoeffer scholarship?”<sup>9</sup> My study of his early journeys attempts to do just that by looking more specifically at how these experiences of otherness relate to his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”. It will become apparent in what ways Bonhoeffer has indeed, as Josiah Young pointed out, “much to offer those of us who are bothered incessantly by the sinful transgression of limits.”<sup>10</sup>

### *A "Theological Geography"*

Given Bonhoeffer's emphasis on having turned "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen", our literature survey looks at key Bonhoeffer studies which have examined the subject of reality in Bonhoeffer's life and thought from a more systematic or a more biographical perspective. The thematic-systematic approaches on Bonhoeffer's concept of reality prove to highlight the centrality of reality in Bonhoeffer's thought, but do not pay any attention to this turning and its relationship to the father or his early journeys. For in stressing the continuities in Bonhoeffer's thoughts on reality they are more interested in ontological structures than the anthropological and socio-political dynamics within which Bonhoeffer's Christ as the ultimate real comes alive. And yet their systematic analysis of these ontological structures lays important ground work for my own reading of Bonhoeffer's turning in the light of his early journeys. Christ is identified as an immanent structure of the everyday empirical world, the ultimate real upholding all reality. Since the real to Bonhoeffer is not simply the factual and empirically verifiable, all concepts of reality have to take account of Christ. In fact, "All real and essential experience becomes in this way the experience of Jesus Christ as the real."<sup>11</sup> But insights into this true and final reality can only be made in "the adventure of responsibility..."<sup>12</sup> Bonhoeffer's early travels both provide us with adventure and pose the question of responsibility in terms of the conditions for genuine encounter. But in what ways do these travel encounters then also witness to a turning to Christ as the ultimate reality?

My reading of Bonhoeffer's early border crossings will emphasize the particular significance of the notion of the boundary as a key concept to understanding the connection Bonhoeffer makes between his early travel encounters and his turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen ...". "Boundary" hereby represents the translation of the German terms "Schranke" and "Grenze", which Bonhoeffer uses in the early theological writings we are considering.<sup>13</sup> The importance attributed to the notion of the boundary in his travels is mirrored in Bonhoeffer's early theological discussions around the theme of authentic sociality. It is along those lines that my thesis attempts to develop further what Reinhart Staats described in passing as Bonhoeffer's "theological

geography”.<sup>14</sup> In this respect personalism’s influence on Bonhoeffer’s understanding of sociality and how reality is in fact constituted in the “I-You” encounter highlights the importance of the boundary as the decisive interface between his turning to reality during his early travel encounters and his theological exploration of genuine sociality. It is in view of the notion of the boundary that one can then also observe a continuum in Bonhoeffer’s thought between factual reality and Christ as the ultimate reality. For, as the final chapter will show, Bonhoeffer’s “theological geography” moves from the “other” as boundary at the margin to Christ as the boundary in the center.

Systematic studies on Bonhoeffer’s understanding of reality observe a constant negotiation between a theology of the Word and a theology of ontological presence, between reality’s hidden and active structure and an acknowledgement of revelation as something which transforms reality from beyond itself. Such negotiation illustrates Bonhoeffer’s attempt to do justice to the unity between the reality of God and the world as “indivisible, polemical, oriented, combative, suffering, and blessed.”<sup>15</sup> Bonhoeffer’s concept of reality is thereby seen to engage theology’s and philosophy’s contribution to discussions on reality with each other. While theology employs the reality of revelation to break the circle of egocentric understanding and its danger of abstraction, philosophy emphasizes the reality of the world to break the circle of a positivistic supernaturalism. Bonhoeffer’s approach hence represents an attempt to navigate between theology’s speculative positivism and philosophy’s idealism of possibility rather than reality. It is in this sense that Bonhoeffer’s “theological geography” provides a theologically and philosophically informed and biographically grounded response to present postcolonial debates on difference and otherness. These discussions provide an important context for our inquiry and will be unfolded around the question of the “other” in our opening chapter.

In contrast to these systematic studies the more biographical approaches to Bonhoeffer’s life and thought discussed in our literature survey all recognize the importance of his early journeys for his theological formation. Their observations provide us with an important commentary on his journeys and his life-long quest for “Wirklichkeitsnähe” in

both its factual and theological sense. And yet once again most of them do not explore the significance of his early travels in view of his remark of having turned “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”. While Ruth Zerner, for example, recognizes the importance of boundary experiences during his American sojourn, she does not discuss the strong theological associations the term boundary carries for Bonhoeffer. Josiah Young’s attempt, in contrast, of employing Bonhoeffer’s theological reflections on the boundary in order to address the problem of racism encourages one to hold biography and theology together and to explore further the profound connection between alterity and reality Young himself clearly identified. And in this sense Bonhoeffer’s journeys represent both a quest for alterity and reality which stood in stark contrast to Hitler’s folkish concept:

Inspired by Wagner’s operas, that set the legends of ancient, Viking-like ancestors – Siegfried, Kriemhild, Brunhild, Hagen – to music, the folkish concept was steeped in mythology. Folklore about dragons, conquest, fighting gods, and invincible champions defined a xenophobic Germany, which came to see in Hitler the reincarnation of its origins – the deification of itself.<sup>16</sup>

### *Experience and Reality*

Examining Bonhoeffer’s early travel experiences as recorded in his diary notes and letters in relation to his life long quest for reality needs to take into account the present difficulties of employing terms such as experience and reality. Reality is not a term that is clearly defined.<sup>17</sup> It can be understood very differently and raises, as Michael Weinrich points out, some difficult questions:

Folgt die Wirklichkeit den Gesetzen der Vernunft, so daß sie durch Erkenntnis und Spekulation vermittels des Begriffs beherrschbar wird? Spricht uns die Wirklichkeit in der Diskontinuität unverrechenbarer Erfahrung an? Oder ist sie gar Gegenstand eines Glaubens, der nicht durch Begriff und Erfahrung, sondern von angefochtener Gewißheit und Hoffnung bestimmt wird?<sup>18</sup>



The conceptual confusion is further increased by the term's renewed popularity in terms of claims to "Wirklichkeitsnähe". Weinrich rightly suspects, "daß in der unbehelligten Undefiniertheit des Begriffs Interessen und Evidenzen versteckt liegen, die lieber nicht genannt werden wollen."<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, theology and the church are often accused of "Wirklichkeitsferne" or "Wirklichkeitsdefizit". In his study on the use of reality in several theological approaches – Bonhoeffer's early theology, among others – Weinrich encourages a careful examination of what one means by experience and how it relates to one's notion of reality. He acknowledges the significance of the problem of experience in the sense that "durch die Erfahrung stets der Wirklichkeitsbezug der Theologie in bestimmter Weise angesprochen [wird]."<sup>20</sup> His concern is with the "Bedeutung der systematisch unverrechenbaren Wirklichkeit, wie sie in der Widersprüchlichkeit des Erlebens wahrnehmbar wird."<sup>21</sup> He therefore continues to problematize "Erlebnis" and "Erfahrung".<sup>22</sup> "Erfahrung" evokes multiple meanings. The daily use of "Erfahrung" has hereby to be distinguished from Kant's use of the term, which until today is seen to dominate its debates.<sup>23</sup> Considering the common use of "Erfahrung" Weinrich indicates how the use of the word implies something authentic, which again signifies singularity and individuality. But even such a personal and subjectivist notion of experience is always already qualified, for experience "bringt ein an sich neutrales phänomenales Erlebnis in bereits gedeuteter Form zur Sprache – 'Sprache' ist bereits wieder etwas Überindividuelles! -, so daß dem Erlebnis die ihm eignende Vieldeutigkeit genommen ist."<sup>24</sup> The term experience needs to be therefore distinguished from the notion of "Erlebnis" which describes "das ungeschilderte Geschehen, das ungedeutete Ereignis, das selbst über keine Sprache verfügt noch über ein Kriterium, das ihm eine bestimmte Würdigung sichert."<sup>25</sup> But "Erlebnis" becomes "Erfahrung" the moment that "Erlebnis zur Sprache gebracht wird, ... es ein Stück seiner Vieldeutigkeit [verliert] und ... ein bestimmtes Profil [erhält]."<sup>26</sup> Such an understanding of experience implies a rigorous dismissal of attempts to establish a binding notion of reality. For no matter how many experiences one has, there will always be experiences that one has not had and will never have. It is in this sense that

Erfahrung auf die Unbegriffenheit und Unbegreifbarkeit der Wirklichkeit [verweist], d.h. sie reklamiert die Nichtidentität von Begriff und Wirklichkeit, von Allgemeinem und Individuellem und widerspricht mit dem Verweis auf den ontologischen Vorrang einer sich selbst zur Geltung bringenden Wirklichkeit der Verbindlichkeit jedes fixierten Begriffs von Wirklichkeit, der stets nur eine bestimmte Deutung umfaßt.<sup>27</sup>

It is this emphasis of the “Nichtidentität von Begriff und Wirklichkeit” which was influential in Bonhoeffer’s early formation. In her reminiscences Bonhoeffer’s sister Sabine Leibholz recalls their father’s adamant “Ablehnung der Phrase” and his challenge to the children “Begriffe und Dinge [zu] definieren.”<sup>28</sup> It ignited a strong dislike for “Schlagwörter[ ], Geschwätz, Gemeinplätze[ ] und Wortschwall”.<sup>29</sup> Bonhoeffer must have thought of this pressing for “Wirklichkeitsnähe” when he thankfully mentions his father’s influence on his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” side by side with the impact of his early journeys. Weinrich’s emphasis of the “Nichtidentität von Begriff und Wirklichkeit, von Allgemeinem und Individuellem” then helps us to pinpoint the profound connection between the father and the early travel experiences Bonhoeffer himself must be thinking of. For, as Weinrich argues, “Das konkrete Leben folgt nicht der Notwendigkeit des Begriffs, sondern ist umstellt von unüberschreitbaren Grenzen individueller Erfahrung.”<sup>30</sup> In relation to both the father and the early journeys, then, the struggle for “Wirklichkeitsnähe” evolves around the problem of representation, which is even more problematic and contested when it comes to representing the reality of the cultural “other”. Exploring the possible connections between father and travel from a psychological perspective, Martin Gross’s analysis suggests a further interpretative level: Bonhoeffer’s “outer” journey into the reality of other cultures could be read as a symbolic representation of his “inner” journey to a remote father who in his own way demands “Wirklichkeitsnähe”.<sup>31</sup>

Since the context of his travel writings is colonialism at its height, it will be interesting to explore in what ways Bonhoeffer’s use of the contrast term “phraseology” lends itself to capture colonialism’s rhetorical strategies devised to tame and contain the cultural strangeness of foreign realities. “Phraseology” would hence describe a thinking in system which does not allow strangeness to disrupt sameness. This resonates with Hans Christoph

von Hase's comments, as discussed in the literature survey, according to whom Bonhoeffer used the tag "phraseological" to brand those theological systems which make no room for the reality of Christ. Bonhoeffer's turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" will therefore have to be made transparent to both its cultural and theological components. This combination in fact forms the heart of Bonhoeffer's "theological geography". And it is this theological component which distinguishes him from "the melancholic seekers after a lost substance or unity that can never be attained."<sup>32</sup> For in line with Weinrich's "Verweis auf den ontologischen Vorrang einer sich selbst zur Geltung bringenden Wirklichkeit" Bonhoeffer firmly maintains that ultimately reality has to be understood christologically. Important to my own study is Weinrich's observation that "die konkrete Vorfindlichkeit eine positive theologische Qualität [erhält], in deren Mißachtung sich die Eigenmächtigkeit des selbstgerechten Subjekts anzeigt."<sup>33</sup> Bonhoeffer's major concern is hereby "die Inkarnation Gottes in die erfahrbare Wirklichkeit, die nun zum kritischen Prinzip gegen alle spekulative Wirklichkeitsproduktion erhoben wird."<sup>34</sup> His critique is thus not only directed towards idealism, but also towards Karl Barth's "Wort-Gottes-Theologie". It reflects a serious concern with theology's relevance in view of an individual's experience of reality.<sup>35</sup>

The important distinction between "Erfahrung" and "Erlebnis" highlighted above, the formative emphasis on the "Nichtidentität von Begriff und Wirklichkeit" and Bonhoeffer's christological critique of "spekulative Wirklichkeitsproduktion" not only reflect Bonhoeffer's passion for the real but also resonate with his reception of Barth's theology of the Word in relation to words. In reference to Barth's theology of the Word Graham Ward outlines the character of a major crisis of representation after 1914: "Philosophically, Barth's work was executed within the context of a major philosophical reorientation towards the problem of language. George Steiner describes the 'profound crisis of confidence in language brought on by the ruin of classic humanist values after 1914'.<sup>36</sup> Ward points out how this "crisis of representation ... was part of a wider crisis of legitimation and confidence in Western European civilization."<sup>37</sup> He refers to Fritz K. Ringer and his classic study of *The Decline of the German Mandarins: the German Academic Community, 1890-1933*<sup>38</sup> in which Ringer argues: "By the early 1920s, they

[the German academic community] were deeply convinced that they were living through a profound crisis, a 'crisis of culture', of 'learning', of 'values', or of the 'spirit'.<sup>39</sup> If Graham Ward is then right in arguing "that theology's primary concern is with its own possibility, its own relationship as a discourse to the original *Deus dixit*"<sup>40</sup>, then theology's fundamental suspicion of representation has an important place in present postcolonial debates encouraging a theologically informed response to the present "crisis of representation". In this sense Bonhoeffer's life and thought offers a crucial juncture for pondering both Barth's *totaliter aliter* and the cultural "other" - recommending a fascinating "correspondence between semiotic, political and theological forms of representation."<sup>41</sup>

### *The Question of Continuity and Discontinuity*

Following his remark of having turned "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" Bonhoeffer ponders the difference between a particular experience of personal change, the more general experience of maturing ("Sichentwickeln") and the experience of a radical break. Bonhoeffer writes to his friend:

Übrigens glaube ich, daß Du Dich auch nicht veränderst hast. Sichentwickeln ist ja etwas anderes. Einen Bruch in unserem Leben haben wir eigentlich beide nicht erfahren. Gewiß haben wir mit manchem von uns aus und bewußt gebrochen, aber auch das ist wieder etwas ganz anderes. Einen Bruch im passiven Sinne wird wohl auch die Zeit, die wir beide jetzt erleben, nicht bedeuten. Früher habe ich mich manchmal nach einem solchen Bruch gesehnt. Heute denke ich darüber anders. Die Kontinuität mit der eigenen Vergangenheit ist doch auch ein großes Geschenk. Bei Paulus steht 1. Tim 1,13 neben 2. Tim 1,3a.<sup>42</sup>

The question of a possible break in one's life makes Bonhoeffer distinguish between a break in an active and a passive sense, which again enables him to integrate his experience of breaks (in an active sense!) with a strong sense of continuity with his own past. Referring to two statements from Paul's letters to Timothy, Bonhoeffer points out how there are side by side both comments on discontinuity and continuity with one's own past. He seems to imply that from a scriptural point of view both perspectives have their

legitimacy. Following Bonhoeffer's own reasoning the turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" will therefore have to be understood as part of what he describes as an experience of "Sichentwickeln" and does not question the strong sense of continuity that is said to characterize his life. This sense of continuity represents, of course, a particular way of understanding the unity of one's life and thought.

Discussing this question of unity Ernst Feil maintains "daß es sich als berechtigt erwiesen hat, Bonhoeffers Leben und Werk auch theologisch als eine Einheit aufzufassen, wie sie biographisch von Eberhard Bethge überzeugend nachgewiesen worden ist."<sup>43</sup> But Feil also draws our attention to the different ways of understanding this unity, "denn in der bislang geführten Diskussion wurde die Einheit der Theologie Bonhoeffers entweder als 'dialektische Entwicklung' dargestellt, derzufolge sich die Theologie Bonhoeffers in 'qualitativen Sprüngen' entwickelt hat, bzw. als 'Zusammenbruch' des theologischen Systems, der freilich keinen 'Bruch' der Theologie impliziert, oder aber als kontinuierliche Entwicklung."<sup>44</sup> In line with Bonhoeffer's own judgement, the majority of Bonhoeffer scholars argue for a unity of his theology in terms of a continuous development.<sup>45</sup> But at the same time Feil cautions any expectations "daß bei Bonhoeffer bestimmte Axiome oder gar ein 'System' im Vordergrund des Interesses gestanden hätten."<sup>46</sup> In view of our two key terms "phraseological" and "real" one needs to therefore heed Feil's advice of not assuming a consistent use of terms hoping to grasp Bonhoeffer's thought by way of a formal analysis of them. For Bonhoeffer knew only too well "daß wichtige Begriffe wie Leben oder auch Welt sich einer Definition widersetzen."<sup>47</sup> Feil, hence, argues that Bonhoeffer's life and thought cannot primarily be understood "unter gnoseologischen Aspekt".<sup>48</sup> It is rather the "Rückbindung der Theologie an den konkreten Glauben" which creates the unity and coherence of his early and late thoughts. At the heart of it emerges a growing engagement with and exposure to the historical reality of both faith and the world: "Er hat im Verlauf seines Lebens immer rückhaltloser in Praxis und Theorie der konkreten, geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit des Glaubens und der Welt bzw. des Glaubens in der Welt sich zur Verfügung gestellt ..."<sup>49</sup> Feil, therefore, suggests the continuity of discipleship as "die Voraussetzung, von der her Bonhoeffer a posteriori seine Theologie entwickelt."<sup>50</sup>

It is this continuity which is seen to give expression to a sense of unity, "die zunächst eine Einheit des Lebens ist, innerhalb deren sich Entwicklung und Entfaltung vollzog, die dann aber auch eine Einheit der Theologie ist, indem sich Ansatz und Grundstruktur der theologischen Reflexion gleich bleiben und gerade so ermöglichen, das Sich-Ereignende zur Sprache zu bringen."<sup>51</sup> It allows us to take Bonhoeffer's early and late reflections and interpret the one through the other. Feil's conclusion that "Bonhoeffers Reflexionen sich aus dem Leben entwickelt haben" and that "seine Theologie der Versuch der Reflexion des gelebten Glaubens ist"<sup>52</sup> is important to my argument. It justifies the particular focus of my analysis which consists in a close reading of his early travel writings, comprising mostly diary notes and letters. The strength of these more personal writings is, of course, as Feil points out, "Daß Bonhoeffer vieles in Briefen unmittelbarer und ungeschützter gesagt hat, als das in wissenschaftlich abgesicherten Aussagen der Fall ist, so sehr damit die Verpflichtung zur Diskretion gegeben ist."<sup>53</sup> In making Bonhoeffer's journeys and the problem of genuine encounter with the cultural "other" our starting point I follow Bonhoeffer's own approach by beginning with "außertheologisch gewonnener Problembeschreibung" followed by "angeschlossener theologischer Reflexion und Begründung ..."<sup>54</sup> Weinrich favors the same approach and suggests an interpretation of Bonhoeffer's theology "als eine existential-ontologische Entfaltung christologischer Ekklesiozentrik": "Die Gestalt der Ekklesiologie folgt der formalen sozialphilosophischen Analyse, die bereits die existential-ontologische Beschreibung der Wirklichkeit bereitstellt, während die Christologie zur inhaltlichen Antwort der philosophischen Frage wird".<sup>55</sup>

### *Outline*

My "theological geography" reflects a similar movement, beginning, after having clarified my methodology (chapter 1), with a socio-philosophical and socio-political analysis of Bonhoeffer's early travel encounters (chapters 2 to 5), including his life-long dream to visit India (chapter 6). The results are then (chapter 7) engaged with Bonhoeffer's theological reflections on the notion of boundary, illustrating once again

how christology becomes the answer to the socio-political and socio-philosophical questions raised. This final chapter is followed by a literature survey (appendix) which helps to situate our thesis within the wider context of Bonhoeffer studies.

<sup>1</sup> Edwin H. Robertson, ed, *No Rusty Swords. Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1939, from the Collected Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (London: Collins, 1965), Harper & Row, 34.

<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 397.

<sup>3</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Jorgen Glenthoj, Ulrich Kabitz and Wolf Krötke, vol. 16 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1996), 366.

<sup>4</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, 366.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Erickson, *Theologians Under Hitler* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1985), 27.

<sup>6</sup> Erickson, *Theologians Under Hitler*, 25-26.

<sup>7</sup> Josiah Ulysses Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 12.

<sup>8</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Heinrich Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 1966, translated by Alex. A. Morrison (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 191.

<sup>12</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 175.

<sup>13</sup> Douglas Bax, the translator of the new English Translation of *Schöpfung und Fall*, has made me aware of the debates among Bonhoeffer translators how to translate Bonhoeffer's use of the term "Grenze". In an unpublished discussion paper, kindly forwarded to me, Bax argues that the "German word *Grenze* itself primarily means 'boundary' in the sense of a boundary around an area which one can and may or may not go beyond." Douglas Bax, Discussion Paper, The Translation of *Grenze* (Cape Town, November 2003), 1. I agree with Bax that in most cases in Bonhoeffer's early writings the translation of "Grenze" with "limit" causes misunderstanding for "'limit' tends much more to mean 'that which cannot be passed', i.e. to be a given (often empirical) reality ..." Bax, Discussion Paper, 1. I decided to use the English "boundary" to translate the German "Grenze" in both its creaturely and its moral sense and allow the context, just as in the German original, to determine the exact meaning.

<sup>14</sup> Reinhart Staats coined this term in view of Bonhoeffer's particular style of travel writing. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 609.

<sup>15</sup> André Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," in *A Bonhoeffer Legacy: Essays in Understanding*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 265.

<sup>16</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 163-64.

<sup>17</sup> In terms of the etymology and history of the concept "Wirklichkeit" Weinrich explains: "Der Begriff der Wirklichkeit (wurcklichkeit, lat. operatio; würrcklichkkeit, lat. actus; wirckelicheit, lat. operabilitas; würrcklicheit; wurcklikait, lat. efficacia) taucht erstmals im Spätmittelhochdeutschen auf und bezeichnet zunächst eine Tätigkeit, eine Aktivität, eine Arbeit, ebenso wie deren Ergebnis, die Auswirkung. Der Begriff Verwirklichung spiegelt diesen Gebrauch heute noch wieder." Michael Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit*

- Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 4. In the 16th century the term is seen to be also used for the characterization of the factual. While the question of reality is seen to represent the basic question of philosophy from early on the term "Wirklichkeit" as such is said to have entered the philosophical debate only in the second half of the 17th century as signifying "die Existenz, die Realität, das wahrnehmbare Dasein, die Tatsächlichkeit ...". Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 4. Replacing the word "Realität" "Wirklichkeit" is representing a contrast "zur Behauptung, der Einbildung, dem Anschein oder dem Wunsch." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 4.
- <sup>18</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, I.
- <sup>19</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, VI.
- <sup>20</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 15.
- <sup>21</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 15.
- <sup>22</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 34.
- <sup>23</sup> Weinrich continues to explain: "In der Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Ausgabe B) beginnt Kant in seiner Einleitung: 'Daß alle unsere Erkenntnis mit der Erfahrung anfangt, daran ist kein Zweifel; ... Doch diese Erfahrung, die auf Raum und Zeit beschränkt ist (A 95/136) und somit etwa eine Glaubenserfahrung ausschließt, ist bereits an die Voraussetzung des Verstandes gebunden (B244/250).'" Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 34, footnote 173.
- <sup>24</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 35.
- <sup>25</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 35.
- <sup>26</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 35.
- <sup>27</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 35.
- <sup>28</sup> Sabine Leibholz, "Kindheit und Elternhaus," in *Begegnungen mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1964), 15f.
- <sup>29</sup> Leibholz, "Kindheit und Elternhaus," 15f.
- <sup>30</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.
- <sup>31</sup> Martin Gross, "Ferne/Nähe. Einige Überlegungen Zum 'Vorläufig Letzten Versuch, die Fremde zu Erfinden'," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schaffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 56-57.
- <sup>32</sup> Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Post-Contemporary Interventions, ed. Stanley Fish and Frederic Jameson (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), 64.
- <sup>33</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 264.
- <sup>34</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 264.
- <sup>35</sup> Weinrich hereby explains: "In der Frage nach dem von der Wirklichkeit in seiner Existenz konkret getroffenen Individuum wird die Relevanz theologischer Sätze festgemacht. In dieser Engführung findet sich der apologetische und ordnungstheologische Aspekt ... Die Existentialität der Theologie liegt nicht allein in dem biblischen Zeugnis des Wortes Gottes im Widerspruch zu den erfahrbaren Wirklichkeiten, sondern folgt den Antagonismen in der vorfindlichen Wirklichkeit als der Offenbarungsquelle göttlichen Wirkens in der Welt, so daß die Theologie konstitutiv auf das aktuelle Erfahrungsbewußtsein des sich selbst verstehenden Menschen zu hören hat, wenn sie eine existentielle Bedeutung erlangen will." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 264.



- <sup>36</sup> Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.
- <sup>37</sup> Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*, 7.
- <sup>38</sup> Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins. The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1969).
- <sup>39</sup> Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*, 7.
- <sup>40</sup> Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*, 10.
- <sup>41</sup> Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*, 7.
- <sup>42</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 397-398.
- <sup>43</sup> Ernst Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 4., Durchges. und Durch ein 2. Nachwort Ergänzte Aufl. (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 127.
- <sup>44</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 127.
- <sup>45</sup> See Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 128.
- <sup>46</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 128.
- <sup>47</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 128.
- <sup>48</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 128.
- <sup>49</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 128. In this respect Feil also points out: "Daher rührt die Vergeblichkeit, von einzelnen Begriffen her Bonhoeffer interpretieren zu wollen. Vielfach sind die Begriffe in sich gar nicht verständlich, da sie nicht umschrieben werden, sondern einfach sachbezogen gebraucht sind ... ." Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 128, footnote 4.
- <sup>50</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 130.
- <sup>51</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 131. Feil also notes: "Man kann daher die Frage, ob sich in 'Widerstand und Ergebung' eine Zäsur findet, nach der die 'neue Erkenntnis', nämlich die Frage des 'religionslosen Christentums' und der 'nicht-religiösen Interpretation' beginnt, nur in sehr begrenztem Rahmen bejahen. Denn Bonhoeffer sieht gerade diese seine Aussagen, so überraschend sie ihm selbst auch erscheinen, doch nicht als grundlegend neu, wie sich noch zeigen wird. Die 'neue' Erkenntnis ist für Bonhoeffer nicht neu im Sinne der Novität, die das Alte beseitigt, sondern im Sinne der tieferen Erfahrung und des tieferen Verständnisses des sich geschichtlich wandelnden Alten." Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 130.
- <sup>52</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 132.
- <sup>53</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 132.
- <sup>54</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 263. In examining the wide range of Bonhoeffer studies Weinrich identifies two basic approaches: "1. man folgt der Abfolge der Entfaltung bei Bonhoeffer und stellt das Gefälle von außertheologisch gewonnener Problembeschreibung und angeschlossener theologischer Reflexion und Begründung fest, oder 2. man geht in Umkehrung der Darstellungsreihenfolge bei Bonhoeffer – so wie es wohl die meisten Bonhoefferinterpreten tun – von der Christologie Bonhoeffers aus und findet in den sozial-philosophischen und philosophischen Überlegungen die konkrete Relevanz und aktuelle Dialogizität seiner Theologie." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 263.
- <sup>55</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 263.

## 1. Mapping the Territory

### *Introduction*

This chapter is critical to my argument because it lays out not only the methodology I employ but in doing so it relates to contemporary studies on travel writings in a postcolonial context. Hence I will show how our study of Bonhoeffer's early travel writings forms part of present postcolonial debates on otherness and the challenge of navigating between destructive forms of universalism and separatism. The renewed emphasis on alterity has brought to the fore the temptation of seeing and hearing the "other" only as the projected "other" and the difficulty of doing justice to otherness and difference. Having looked at popular concepts as embrace and encounter and the symbolic significance of both departure and return I continue to explore more specifically the wide range of experiences of "Fremdheit" and the possibility of genuine encounter. I hereby introduce Ortfried Schöffter's different configurations of the boundary and the corresponding modi of "Fremderfahrung" which provide me with the key interpretative tool to examine Bonhoeffer's early border crossings and to highlight the connection Bonhoeffer makes between "Fremderfahrung" and reality. As I then climb "Tibi Dabo" with Bonhoeffer the intimate connection between power and visual surveillance so characteristic of travel writings illustrates the importance of developing a "theological geography" of the boundary in dialogue with Bonhoeffer's early journeys and theological reflections.

My focus on Bonhoeffer the traveller coincides with a growing interest in metaphors of travel in contemporary literary and cultural criticism. By examining the different kinds of travellers and rethinking culture in terms of travel I am able to show how human difference is articulated within a complex web of cultural experiences. Bonhoeffer's travels thus encourage the use of what has been coined a "contact perspective" emphasizing the often asymmetrical relations of power at play in every encounter with the "other". The category of the tourist can hence function as an important lens for viewing Bonhoeffer as an agent of modernity caught up in the politics of "desire and transgression" in his search for authenticity and the ultimate real. This complicity in colonial and neo-colonial practices is further unfolded in a short overview of the genre of travel writing from a historical and a literary

perspective. I conclude this chapter by drawing on insights of Dennis Porter, Michel Foucault and Homi Bhaba in order to challenge the kind of radical discourse theory which argues that otherness is always silenced in colonial and neo-colonial encounters of self and “other”. Thus Wilfried Schäffter’s modi of “Fremderfahrung”, and in particular his notion of the boundary, not only provide one with the necessary tools to pinpoint those moments of resistance which give voice to the “other” but also illustrate the significance of Bonhoeffer’s “theological geography” for a theological informed response to the question of genuine encounter and the possibility of representation. I therefore hope that my reading of Bonhoeffer’s early travels in tandem with his “theological geography” of the boundary will not prove to be “a specialized erudite knowledge of Europe’s guilty past but the provoking rediscovery of new traces of the past *today*, a recognition that transforms belatedness into politics of contemporaneity.”<sup>1</sup>

### *The Question of the “Other”: Navigating Universalism and Separatism*

Philosophical discussions on otherness were well on their way when Bonhoeffer embarked on his first journey to Rome. Their particular problematic is well illustrated by the debate between two prominent contemporaries of Bonhoeffer, Thomas Mann and Oswald Spengler. Giving a talk on Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Leo Tolstoy in his hometown of Lübeck, Mann diagnosed the intellectual climate of September 1921 as the end of the epoch of liberal humanism and its universal aspirations. Three years after World War I., Mann witnessed the rapid disintegration of this tradition. He observed “that the Mediterranean and classical heritage of universalism was everywhere in Europe giving way to forms of anti-universalism – nationalism, dictatorship, and terror.”<sup>2</sup> Radical movements of ethnic separatism expressed an antiliberal stance which suppressed “all forms of cosmopolitanism – Jewish internationalism, Christian universalism, classical humanism.”<sup>3</sup> Dissenting with such a stance Mann’s credo went against antiliberal values like “vigor and violence, firm resolution, decision and stern commitment” and extolled their very opposites: “versatility and suppleness, deference, the prolonged stage of ‘not yet,’ the suspension of the end, and a Janus-faced irony which plays in the space between the harsh opposites.”<sup>4</sup> He invoked a theory of irony which according to Aleida Assmann implied a theory of intercultural translation: “Mann defines irony ironically as ‘pathos

of the middle,' meaning not the golden mean but the open space between fixed positions. Mann invokes the god Hermes as the deity of this intermediary realm; the go-between and trickster, patron of thieves, translators, and interpreters, master of tricks and transformations."<sup>5</sup> Mann's "personal credo of universal humanity" presents us with only one particular form of universalism. And yet its vision of a universal unity and its loyalty to the One is representative of all universalism.<sup>6</sup> Mann's "pathos of the middle" is contrasted with Oswald Spengler's influential and controversial best-seller *The Decline of the West* (1924) which provided a rationale for ethnic separatism by proposing a "theory of the untranslatability of cultures, of radical alterity, mutual strangeness, and profound untranslatability of cultures."<sup>7</sup>

Present postcolonial debates on otherness continue to pose the challenge of navigating between universalism and separatism.<sup>8</sup> But while today all forms of universalism have come under radical scrutiny, dismissing the regulative ideal of the One, a general postmodern ethos of difference affirms deviances, gaps, and radical alterity. It is formulated "against the background of a world that is growing ever more homogeneous, a world in which distances are rapidly shrinking as the networks of commerce and economy, of traffic and communication are spreading across the globe."<sup>9</sup> As a consequence "Bridges are no longer welcome because they hide abysses and rifts."<sup>10</sup> And "From a menacing, anxiety-provoking term, 'the other' has become the central value of postmodern culture."<sup>11</sup> But in contrast to all forms of ethnic separatism, which ultimately aim at erasing the "other" for the sake of homogeneity, this postmodern emphasis of radical alterity aims at giving voice to the silenced "other" encouraging an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance.

This emphasis on difference goes hand in hand with a growing consensus within Western academia that presumed Western superiority can no longer stand. The emerging new "polycentric world"<sup>12</sup>, as David Tracy coins it, has created a new moral awareness of the need to listen to and learn from alternative memories and experiences. The Western center "must turn in conversation and solidarity to all the other centers with respect for its own heritage allied to an exposure, at long last, to other heritages."<sup>13</sup> The question of the "other" has therefore, as Richard Bernstein indicates, moved to "the very center of philosophy and the full range of the cultural disciplines."<sup>14</sup> Apparently already Hegel "understood what has become even more

extreme in the twentieth century - how the lust for absolute freedom and abstract universality can seek to destroy all differences, otherness, and plurality.’<sup>15</sup> And it is, indeed, no secret how the concepts of reason and universality have been abused to suppress and repress otherness and difference.

But at the same time every critical attempt to activate difference has to face the temptation and danger alike of seeing and hearing the “other” only as the projected “other”. For the “other” “envisaged from the self-named center is too often a projected “other”. This projection is provoked “either by the new fears of the loss of privilege and power of the modern bourgeois subject, or the hopes for another chance of the neoconservative, or the desires for escape from modernity of the postmodern nonself.”<sup>16</sup> In this respect Bernstein commends Emmanuel Lévinas as the one whose formulations of the “problem of the other” are said to be the most extreme and radical in the twentieth century. For according to Lévinas “the entire tradition of Western philosophy, from Parmenides through Hegel to Husserl and Heidegger, has been ensnared in a dialectic of same and Other where the temptation has always been to encompass or reduce the Other to the same.”<sup>17</sup> How does one overcome, then, such a temptation, and how does one do justice to otherness? The twentieth-century concern with alterity seems to have only just begun to permeate the Western foundations of theology. Otherness and difference portray the alternatives to, in Tracy’s words, “the deadening sameness, the totalizing system, the false security of the modern self-grounding subject.”<sup>18</sup> The ‘Deconstruction’ of the modern belief in pure *presence*, then, leaves the modern Western de-centered self with no other alternative than to re-imagine oneself in the light of otherness and difference.

This dialectic of same and “other” as pinpointed by Lévinas is unfolded by Assmann in terms of the basic distinction between embrace and encounter. She draws on the insights of two important exponents of German literature, Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who each in their own way examined the dynamics of human interaction. Goethe’s maxim exemplifies theories which affirm the dominance of the One in the sense that “ ‘The most beautiful metempsychosis is the one in which we recognize ourselves in the shape of the other.’ ”<sup>19</sup> In this case “the other is used as the screen on which the self is projected.”<sup>20</sup> Projection, then, becomes extension of the self and “the triumph of the poetic genius in his ability to assimilate the world to the

self.”<sup>21</sup> While this model of interaction is based on empathy, it is also associated with colonization in the sense that “It aims at a dissolution of barrier” and that “its final stage is fusion.”<sup>22</sup> Its ultimate goal is “the successful return to the enriched self.”<sup>23</sup> In stark contrast to Goethe, Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s concern is with affirming the copresence of the Two and is summed up as “the sustained presence of the other.”<sup>24</sup> Reflecting on identity and alterity von Hofmannsthal employs the language of eros in order to distinguish between embrace and encounter: “Embrace is linked to the mode of the One; it implies fusion, unity, extension of the self. Encounter is linked with the mode of the Two; it invokes alterity, surprise, mystery, and awe ... In the embrace, strangeness, estrangement are fatal, cruel, paradox – in the encounter, each is shrouded in its eternal solitude as in a precious cloak.”<sup>25</sup> This basic distinction between embrace and encounter provides us with a helpful framework for our analysis of Bonhoeffer’s early travel encounters. It not only traces the theme of encounter in Bonhoeffer’s own German tradition but also sums up the concerns raised by the recent discussions on otherness. Bonhoeffer’s travel encounters take place “along the policed and transgressive intercultural frontiers of nations, peoples, locales.”<sup>26</sup> Very often along those frontiers “Stasis and purity are asserted – creatively and violently – *against* historical forces of movement and contamination.”<sup>27</sup> To what extent, then, can Bonhoeffer the youthful traveler inspire us to navigate the repressive alternatives of universalism and separatism and to discover the dynamics of genuine encounter?

In this respect it is important to bear in mind that travelling is as much about departure as it is about return. And it is in particular the question of the return which according to Lévinas needs to be pondered not just in its literal but also in its symbolic sense and thereby offers another perspective on the distinction between embrace and encounter. In his phenomenological quest for *Die Spur des Anderen*<sup>28</sup> Lévinas contrasts two very influential travel accounts: the myth of Odysseus and the story of Abraham. While Odysseus finally returns to Ithaka, Abraham leaves his homeland forever, in order to journey to a land unknown to him – yes, not even his son is allowed to return to the point of departure.<sup>29</sup> Lévinas’ critical appraisal of Odysseus’ homecoming rather suggests Abraham’s journey without return as an appropriate model for our human journeys. For according to Lévinas “darf der Weg zum neuen Denken kein Weg zurück nach Ithaka, kein Weg zum eigenen Selbst sein.”<sup>30</sup> Abraham becomes the example of an “exodus without return”<sup>31</sup> providing us with a radical experience of

alterity which implies the following hierarchy: "Das Suchen ist wichtiger als der Besitz, das Bedürfnis ist besser als der Genuß, das Scheitern ist wahrer als der Triumph, der Zweifel vollkommener als die Gewißheit, die Frage geht weiter als die Antwort."<sup>32</sup> Lévinas' argument goes against a dominant allegorical reading of Odysseus the inner traveller within Christian theology: He became a popular paradigm of the Christian pilgrim, "the ideal model of a traveller whose journey brought inner as well as outer fulfilment, return to a spiritual plenitude lost in the travails of life, as well as success in the sense of worldly achievement."<sup>33</sup> In whose footsteps, then, does Bonhoeffer himself travel? And on what kind of encounters does he encourage us to embark?

### *Genuine Encounter and Experiences of "Fremdheit"*

Our examination of Bonhoeffer's early travel encounters looks in particular at what Otfried Schöffter discusses as experiences of "Fremdheit".<sup>34</sup> I thereby follow Norbert Mecklenburg who clarifies the distinct use of the term "Fremdheit" within discussions on difference as follows: "Was in analytischer Rede aus der 'Beobachter-Perspektive' Differenz heißt, das heißt in hermeneutischer Rede aus der 'Mitspieler-Perspektive' Fremdheit."<sup>35</sup> In looking at Bonhoeffer's experiences of "Fremdheit" I attempt to explore the possibility of genuine encounter with the reality of the cultural "other". Lévinas' emphasis on moments of searching doubt and questioning is hereby translated into what James Clifford envisions as "attitudes of tact, receptivity, and self-irony [which] are conducive to nonreductive understandings ..."<sup>36</sup> In terms of the limits and possibilities of nonreductive understanding two basic positions have emerged in the wake of postcolonial debates on otherness. The one position categorically denies the possibility of understanding the "other" because of the constant "Vereinnahmung des Fremden durch Reduzierung auf vertraute Schemata ..."<sup>37</sup> The other position highlights the dialogical character and the "Prozeßhaftigkeit" of understanding the "other" reckoning with the possibility "das F[remde] in seiner Besonderheit zu erfassen, ohne es als unmöglich anzusehen oder es zu trivialisieren".<sup>38</sup>

Theo Sundermeier, one of the few German theologians taking up the issue of "Fremdverstehen", argues along the lines of the second position for a xenological

hermeneutics. He opposes recent attempts to dispense with the possibility of understanding the "other". His evaluation of various models of encounter in his book *Den Fremden verstehen*<sup>39</sup> offers an important point of reference for our analysis, encouraging us to engage the insights and shortcomings of the various disciplines involved in understanding the dynamics of encounter with the cultural "other".<sup>40</sup> Ethnology, history of art, philosophy, communication theory and history of religion are interrogated in terms of their particular contribution for developing what Sundermeier coins a "*Differenzhermeneutik*".<sup>41</sup> It is defined as a hermeneutic, "die das Differente verstehen lehrt, ohne es zu vereinnahmen, die praktische Hilfe bietet, die Nähe des Zusammenlebens einzuüben, und zugleich die richtige Distanz bewahrt, die die Identität des Fremden respektiert und die uns allen gemeinsame Menschenwürde achtet."<sup>42</sup> In line with psychological, philosophical and socio-anthropological insights Sundermeier acknowledges, "daß es Identitätsfindung und –bewußtsein des Einzelnen nicht ohne den anderen gibt."<sup>43</sup> But the real challenge is seen to arise when encounter with the "other" is specified in terms of an encounter with the cultural "other". Such an encounter, he maintains, "darf nicht der Identitätsfindung dienen, sondern setzt Identitäten voraus."<sup>44</sup> It highlights the need for an encounter whereby both sides avoid reducing the "other" to the same and are able to acknowledge mutual "Fremdheit". In this respect religion is perceived to be able to play an important part in view of providing a substantial and convincing motivation for encounter.<sup>45</sup>

It is hereby important to remember, as Ortfried Schöffter observes, "daß Fremdheit ein Beziehungsverhältnis darstellt, das sich durch Nähe intensiviert."<sup>46</sup> For it is only through immediate contact that "die zunächst latent zugrundeliegenden Unterschiedlichkeiten eine soziale Bedeutung erlangen und sich zu persönlichen, gruppenbezogenen, politischen, ökonomischen oder kulturellen Reibungsflächen aufbauen."<sup>47</sup> In this sense the notion of "Fremdheit" cannot be regarded as "objektiver Tatbestand, sondern als eine die eigene Identität herausfordernde Erfahrung."<sup>48</sup> "Fremdheit" cannot therefore be understood as a particular quality of things or persons, but only as a relational term, "dessen Bedeutung sich nur dann voll erschließt, wenn man seine eigenen Anteile in diesem Beziehungsverhältnis mit zu berücksichtigen vermag."<sup>49</sup> Furthermore encounters between different worlds are characterized by a clash of very different concepts and perceptions of "Fremdheit":



“Fremde sind daher einander oft auch auf unterschiedliche Weise fremd- und sind sich dessen nur ausnahmsweise bewußt.”<sup>50</sup> Cross-cultural experiences of “Fremdheit” are therefore multi-faceted and in tension with different aspects of identity, “zwischen einer personalen, sozialen oder kulturellen Identität zu dem von ihr selbst Ausgegrenzten – sei es als das psychisch Verdrängte (die innere Fremdheit), *die* Fremde als räumliche Ferne, *der* Fremde als alter ego oder *das* Fremde als fremdartiger Objektbereich.”<sup>51</sup> However the context of such an encounter is not necessarily always “*die* Fremde als räumliche Ferne ...”<sup>52</sup> On the contrary Schäffter notices how, due to greater mobility and the dissolution of political and social boundaries, “*die* Fremde” increasingly becomes an experience of our everyday life.<sup>53</sup>

In examining Bonhoeffer’s early border crossings Schäffter’s different configurations of the boundary and their corresponding experiences of “Fremdheit” are of special significance. Cultural, national, social or personal constructions of identity are seen to always presuppose certain boundary markers, which again imply a particular understanding of the separating line. The boundary can be envisioned as “Grenzlinie, Kontaktstelle, Spannungsgefälle, Konfliktfeld, Berührungsfläche, Erfahrungshorizont, Informationsquelle ...”<sup>54</sup> Each of these terms in turn suggests a specific understanding or experience of “Fremdheit”: “Das Fremde als das Auswärtige”, “Das Fremde als Fremdartiges”, “Das Fremde als das noch Unbekannte”, “Das Fremde als das letztlich Unerkennbare” and “Das Fremde als das Unheimliche.”<sup>55</sup>

Important to our own argument is Schäffter’s observation how these different perceptions of “Fremdheit” are based on particular “Ordnungsschemata”, which presuppose societal definitions of reality and always concern issues of power and control. But they are also “Ausdruck von selbstvergessenen Ordnungsleistungen, die auf einer elementaren Wirklichkeitsebene eine permanente Reproduktion von Mustern der Unterscheidung bewirken.”<sup>56</sup> These distinguishing patterns are seen to structure the world, to provide understanding and foresight and in that sense a degree of control. At the same time they are an expression of one’s own standpoint and interest which is shown to be in competition with other world views. The danger is that these patterns or structures of interpreting “Fremdheit” become politically repressive, “wenn sie sich als natürliche Ordnung verstehen und folglich den ihnen zugrundeliegenden Interessenstandpunkt zu einer objektiven oder universellen Sicht

verabsolutieren.”<sup>57</sup> Schäffter suggests assigning the following modi of “Fremderfahrung” to four categories of “Ordnungsschemata”:

1. Ordnungen transzendenter Ganzheit: Das Fremde als tragender Grund und Resonanzboden von Eigenheit.
2. Ordnungen perfekter Vollkommenheit: Das Fremde als Negation von Eigenheit.
3. Ordnungskonzepte dynamischer Selbstveränderung: Fremdheit als Chance zur Ergänzung und Vervollständigung.
4. Konzeptionen komplementärer Ordnung: Eigenheit und Fremdheit als Zusammenspiel sich wechselseitig hervorrufender Kontrastierungen.<sup>58</sup>

These four “Ordnungsschemata” and their respective modi of “Fremderfahrung” provide us with an overall interpretative framework for the analysis of Bonhoeffer’s travel encounters and will be unfolded in detail when I analyse Bonhoeffer’s early travel writings. Each category lends itself to an interdisciplinary approach which draws on insights from anthropological, ethnological, philosophical, theological and rhetorical studies. The first three categories of experiencing “Fremdheit” thus illustrate the kind of encounter von Hofmannsthal describes as embrace: these encounters only serve the extension of and the return to the self; they represent a reductive understanding of the “other” as the projected “other”; they imply an order of what I referred to as deadening sameness and totalizing system; and in furthering the mode of the One they nurture forms of universalism and separatism. The fourth category of experiencing “Fremdheit”, in contrast, conveys the kind of genuine encounter which, as mentioned above, invokes “alterity, surprise, mystery, and awe ...”: this encounter represents a journey without return to the enriched self; it avoids fusion and strives for a nonreductive understanding of the “other”.

Important to our argument is also the recognition that every “Ordnungsschemata” presupposes a particular understanding of reality. Read the other way around, it becomes clear that one’s definition of reality clearly shapes the nature of one’s “Fremderfahrung”. Interestingly, Bonhoeffer’s comment about having turned “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” during his early travels explicitly states this very connection between “Fremderfahrung” and reality. Schäffter’s observations therefore encourage a more in-depth exploration of this connection and provide us with a set of

critical tools to interpret Bonhoeffer's turning to reality in the light of his early "Fremderfahrten". And yet, Bonhoeffer's statement goes beyond merely describing a connection between "Fremderfahrten" and reality. He reckons that these "Fremderfahrten" in fact enabled a turning "zum Wirklichen" implying an ongoing hermeneutical circle between one's "Fremderfahrten" and one's experience of reality. The key to its understanding can be found, as I will try to show, in Schäffter's emphasis on the significance of boundary experiences for a genuine encounter with the reality of the cultural "other", which is located within the fourth category of experiencing "Fremdheit".

### *"Tibi Dabo" and Bonhoeffer's Theological Geography of the Boundary*

During his stay in Barcelona Dietrich Bonhoeffer embarks on an excursion to the "Tibi dabo", the highest of the mountains surrounding the city. He is deeply impressed by the view from above and notes in his diary: "Vom Tibi dabo aus hat man einen wirklich unheimlich schönen Blick über die Stadt und die Berge der Umgebung bis zum Monserrat, so daß die Ableitung der Volksetymologie aus der Versuchungsgeschichte 'das alles 'tibi dabo ...' zu gewissem Recht besteht."<sup>59</sup> Bonhoeffer, the youthful traveller, surveys the Spanish countryside from the same mountain on which Jesus is said to have been tempted by the devil promising him the power to rule over the world. It is a highly symbolic moment, poignantly illustrating the temptation of power implied in the privilege of the colonial gaze, that looks at, but forbids the looking back.<sup>60</sup> It visualizes the kind of surveillance that has always been part of what Caren Kaplan described as the "historical phenomenon of modern imperialism in the context of European and U.S. industrialization, the economic and cultural annexation of regions into a 'Third World' and subsequent decolonizations, as well as the shifts and destabilizations engendered by the deindustrialization of the so-called First World ..."<sup>61</sup> These phenomena all propose distinct and varied questions for travel and demonstrate an "economy of uneven exchange", "the economy of an essentially colonial situation ..."<sup>62</sup>

The gaze upon which every traveller relies marks, according to David Spurr, "an exclusion as well as a privilege: the privilege of inspecting, of examining, of looking at, by its nature excludes the journalist [as any other traveller] from the human reality

constituted as the object of observation."<sup>63</sup> But Spurr is right to point out that apart from "the overpowering and potentially destructive effect of the gaze" there is also its role as "the active instrument of construction, order, and arrangement."<sup>64</sup> This "ideology of the gaze" is most clearly illustrated by the panoramic vista as experienced by Bonhoeffer on the mountain of temptation. For one "knows the importance of the commanding view – the panoramic vista – to architecture, landscape painting, and sites of tourism, as well as to scientific research, military intelligence, and police surveillance: it offers aesthetic pleasure on one hand, information and authority on the other."<sup>65</sup> It is this combination of pleasure and power which gives "the commanding view a special role in journalistic writing [and travel writing in general], especially in the colonial situation, for it conveys a sense of mastery over the unknown and over what is often perceived by the Western writer as strange and bizzare."<sup>66</sup> And yet the commanding view is also "an originating gesture of colonization itself, making possible the exploration and mapping of territory which serves as the preliminary to a colonial order."<sup>67</sup>

This intimate relation between power and visual surveillance comes to the fore in Michel Foucault's discussion of the Panopticon, "Jeremy Bentham's eighteenth-century design for a circular prison divided into individual cells, all of which could be observed from the single vantage point of an enclosed central tower ..."<sup>68</sup> This architectural design is said to serve as the model for modern prisons, while the "panoptic principle" is also being used in schools, libraries, hospitals, and factories.<sup>69</sup> Foucault's analysis of the principle observes that "what guarantees control in the Panopticon is the analytical arrangement of space ..."<sup>70</sup> The end result is "a machinery of dissymmetry, disequilibrium, and difference."<sup>71</sup> The kind of power exercised on the other hand is noncorporal, since "it depends on spatial configuration rather than on the use of force."<sup>72</sup> It is in this sense that sight confers power to the observer, while "for the observed, visibility is a trap."<sup>73</sup> Many of Bonhoeffer's travel encounters reflect "the commanding view"<sup>74</sup> and thereby illustrate Schäffter's first three categories of experiences of "Fremdheit". And in this sense Bonhoeffer's *grand tour* reveals a position of visual advantage which made him "an accomplice to the very system of authority, of control, and of surveillance" that has caused so much injustice and anguish.<sup>75</sup> The extent to which dynamics of power underlie even the most ordinary ethnographic modes of surveillance will become clear. For many of

Bonhoeffer's descriptions reveal a "rhetorical convention based on the sweeping visual mastery of a scene ..."<sup>76</sup>

But there is another side to this mountain experience. For in the process of naming the mountain has been invested with theological meaning. It corresponds with what Reinhart Staats described as Bonhoeffer's "theological geography" and expresses his habit of underpinning his ethnographic observations with theological significance.<sup>77</sup> This habit is more than yet another, this time theological, attempt to subordinate the visual data to the power of the writer-explorer. For these theological interpretations are accompanied by what I would like to coin more specifically a "theological geography of the boundary". This personal and theological concern for the notion of the boundary is, as I will show in the following and the last chapter, reflected in his early theological writings and expresses a desire for "Wirklichkeitsnähe" in terms of safeguarding difference and otherness towards a genuine experience of sociality. Hence, Bonhoeffer's commanding view, extending to the horizon, is deeply concerned with the boundaries or lack of boundaries surveyed. And therefore, when he descends from the heights of mountain ranges he does not, as Spurr comments on the gaze of the Western writer, simply "explore(s) the bodies and faces of people with the same freedom that ... [he] brings to the survey of a landscape."<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer instead explores, as I will show in the last chapter, a counter-movement invested with the aura of the "Geheimnis" which undermines the hierarchical confrontation of cultures and people and its assumption that the closer the range of encounter the more powerful the effect of the gaze of the writer. Bonhoeffer's theological geography of the boundary represents a means of resistance to "a mode of thinking and writing wherein the world is radically transformed into an object of possession."<sup>79</sup> This theological geography pre-and postludes travel encounters which caught the imperial self by surprise and confronted it with an experience of the boundary.

#### *Travel and Culture: A "Contact" Perspective*

Bonhoeffer's travels punctuate a life of restless movements and unceasing interest in other cultures. His various stays abroad and his ecumenical involvement speak of a life keen to widen its horizons and to critically engage his own cultural heritage. Keith Clements notes that Bonhoeffer "found a compelling interest in cultures and styles,

but he never simply rhapsodized over the exotic, or used the excitement of being abroad as an escape from the supposedly more mundane home scene."<sup>80</sup> Instead, Clements maintains, his "foreign encounters became the means of reflecting critically on his previous experiences and assumptions, and of providing new insights to be considered and possibly adapted for application at home."<sup>81</sup> Germany's cultural milieu at his time exhibited in stark contrast the classic quest for pure tradition and national homogeneity in the sense that "pseudo-mysticism, voelkism, neo-romanticism, *Lebensphilosophie* and popular irrationalism all called increasingly for 'immediacy', the conjuring of 'presence'."<sup>82</sup> Bonhoeffer's great mobility and "contamination" with other cultures embodied a sharp critique of such dangerous provincialism and a forceful antagonism to the detrimental politics of purity. At the same time Bonhoeffer's cultural background did not present him with a homogenous entity, but a complex and diverse site of struggle between basically three different expressions of what is to be representative of German culture, symbolized in three constitutional changes within Bonhoeffer's own life-time (1906-1945): Wilhelmine Empire (*Kaiserreich*), Weimar Republic, and Third Reich.<sup>83</sup>

Our interest in Bonhoeffer the traveller coincides with a "prevalence of metaphors of travel and displacement" in contemporary literary and cultural criticism in Europe and the United States suggesting "that the modern era is fascinated by the experience of distance and estrangement ..."<sup>84</sup> And yet Kaplan emphasizes that "displacement is not universally available or desirable for many subjects, nor is it evenly experienced."<sup>85</sup> She argues that "Although modern imperialism does not structure every aspect of culture in every site around the globe, ... the emergence of terms of travel and displacement (as well as their oppositional counterparts, home and location) in contemporary criticism must be linked to the histories of the production of colonial discourses."<sup>86</sup> The reflections of the maps and stories of travels operative in Bonhoeffer's life and thought acknowledge the movements of people across boundaries and continents in the context of imperialism and colonialism. A range of very different travellers, according to Musa Dube, mirror the constant power play at stake: "People have travelled voluntarily or involuntarily as fortune seekers, slaves, religious agents, refugees, outcasts, students etc. Those who travel and those who do not travel have interacted under different power relations. Some travellers and guests are powerful wherever they travel, while other travellers are continually

disadvantaged.”<sup>87</sup> Where does Bonhoeffer then fit in? Given his class background, do his travel writings not present us with plots of a powerful traveller? And does our study then not buy into “high culture’s fascination with singular, elite figures of travel”?<sup>88</sup>

The analysis of his travel writings must consider these questions in the light of the historical context of Bonhoeffer’s journeys. Kaplan calls our attention “to the continuities and discontinuities between terms such as ‘travel,’ ‘displacement,’ and ‘location’ as well as between the particularized practices and identities of ‘exile,’ ‘tourist,’ and ‘nomad.’”<sup>89</sup> She forcefully argues that even though not all displacements are the same “the occidental ethnographer, the modernist expatriate poet, the writer of popular travel accounts, and the tourist may all participate in the mythological narrativizations of displacement without questioning the cultural, political, and economic grounds of their different professions, privileges, means, and limitations.”<sup>90</sup> Bonhoeffer himself was deeply aware of his particular “privileges, means, and limitations.” Hence, his participation in the mythological narrativizations of displacement, for example in Barcelona’s German diaspora community of immigrants, remained confined to his Christian self-understanding as a pilgrim seeking the heavenly homeland. It was a Christian rhetoric which in Bonhoeffer’s case did not eradicate difference but expressed solidarity with immigrants, refugees, exiles, nomads, and the homeless who were more than, as Kaplan critically comments, “metaphors, tropes, and symbols” moving in and out of the discourses of the powerful.<sup>91</sup> Instead Bonhoeffer was able to see them “as historically recognized producers of critical discourses”, as his encounter with the Afro-Americans in Harlem will also show. It represents a powerful move against “Euro-American discourses of displacement [which] tend to absorb difference and create historical amalgams.”<sup>92</sup>

Travel writings are known “to present themselves as maps that invite their readers to travel with them, to take certain journeys and to become particular travellers (and hosts/hostesses).”<sup>93</sup> Writing from a Botswana perspective Dube indicates the extent to which “in the current economic plot ... the story-maps of the powerful travellers have the capacity to replay themselves”: “The people of Southern Africa and Africa in general had to fight wars of liberation in order to reverse the power relations established by powerful travellers of colonial times in the region. Yet the current trend

shows that we are not through with plots of powerful travellers.”<sup>94</sup> Dube bemoans how in the global economic age “the foreign travellers who come on their own or who are invited to come and do business in Botswana come as masters, manufacturers, investors, creators etc. who are powerful guests among the ‘dependent’ natives.”<sup>95</sup> Dube’s brief account of her own travelling experiences as a Sub-Saharan black African is in stark contrast to the powerful travellers arriving in her own country and by way of comparison forces us to recognize that Bonhoeffer’s travel stories are representative of a small minority of First World/Class travellers. She identifies her own narrative plot as a traveller, as both hostess and guest, as having been for the most part a plot of the powerless.<sup>96</sup> Her journey of self-discovery included listening to the media capitalizing on presenting a disgusting image of Africa.<sup>97</sup> Summing up her story-maps, Dube outlines the control the narrative plots of the powerful continue to have on her own narrative plot.<sup>98</sup> She manages to show how the explanation of her story-maps indicates “that world history is dominated by plots of different travellers – powerless travellers, powerful travellers, powerful host/hostesses, powerless hosts/hostesses, and their collaborating counterparts. Many narrative plots are designed to empower some travellers over their native hosts/hostesses and/or to suppress other travellers. These narratives invite readers to collaborate with the powerful travellers.”<sup>99</sup> What journeys does Bonhoeffer then prompt us to take? Following the routes of his story-map I am told to embark on a journey “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”. The knowledge of the reinstated dominance of colonial story-maps forces us to be critical and resistant companions, ready to learn but also “to plot new journeys, ... to draw new maps and to establish new rules for travelling and hosting others.”<sup>100</sup>

In the light of Clifford’s poetic interplay of “roots” and “routes” Bonhoeffer’s life illustrates “a view of human location as constituted by displacement as much as by stasis.”<sup>101</sup> We are invited to explore how “Practices of displacement ... emerge as *constitutive* of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension.”<sup>102</sup> In the same way we are reminded that “The cultural effects of European expansionism ... [can] no longer be celebrated, or deplored, as a simple diffusion outward – of civilization, industry, science, or capital. For the region called ‘Europe’ has been constantly remade, and traversed, by influences beyond its borders ...”<sup>103</sup> Our theological “log-book” therefore argues with James Clifford, “that travels and



contacts are crucial sites for an unfinished modernity.”<sup>104</sup> “Given the prestige of travel experiences as sources of power and knowledge in a wide range of societies, Western and non-Western, the project of comparing and translating different traveling cultures need not be class- or ethnocentric.”<sup>105</sup> Bonhoeffer’s travel writings take us on a journey of exploration into the deep waters of what Mary Pratt describes as “contact zones”, those “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination ...”<sup>106</sup> Foregrounding the interactive dimension of such relations Pratt introduces the notion of the contact perspective which

emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travellers and ‘travelees,’ not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.<sup>107</sup>

I follow Clifford in hanging on to “‘travel’ as a term of cultural comparison precisely because of its historical taintedness, its associations with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents, and the like.”<sup>108</sup> In other words “travel” is used as a “translation term”, as “a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way.”<sup>109</sup> Clifford explains: “‘Travel’ has an inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness. It offers a good reminder that all translation terms used in global comparisons – terms like ‘culture,’ ‘art,’ ‘society,’ ‘peasant,’ ‘mode of production,’ ‘man,’ ‘woman,’ ‘modernity,’ ‘ethnography’ – get us some distance *and* fall apart. *Tradittore, traduttore.*”<sup>110</sup> The use of the word “travel” in this study leans towards James Clifford’s “expansive” use which “goes a certain distance and falls apart into nonequivalents, overlapping experiences marked by different translation terms: ‘diaspora,’ ‘borderland,’ ‘immigration,’ ‘migrancy,’ ‘tourism,’ ‘pilgrimage,’ ‘exile’.”<sup>111</sup> These categories promise a fresh interpretative perspective with a specific focus on how “human difference [is] articulated in displacement, tangled cultural experiences, structures and possibilities of an increasingly connected but not homogenous world.”<sup>112</sup> “Travel” hereby signifies not only the journey to another place, but also the return to the place the traveller thinks of as “home”.

While looking at the “specific dynamics of dwelling/travelling” in Bonhoeffer’s life I follow Clifford’s attempt of rethinking culture and its science, anthropology, in terms of travel<sup>113</sup> “tipping the balance toward travelling” and arguing that “the ‘chronotope’ of culture (a setting or scene organizing time and space in representable whole form) comes to resemble as much a site of travel encounters as of residence ...”<sup>114</sup> As a consequence “the organic, naturalizing bias of the term ‘culture’ – seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, and so on – is questioned. Constructed and disputed *historicit*ies, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view.”<sup>115</sup> New theoretical paradigms in anthropology emphasize the relational character of those local and global processes and “begin with historical contact, with entanglement at intersecting regional, national, and transnational levels.”<sup>116</sup> It links in with “a postmodern stress on interactive process and negotiation, indeterminacy, fragmentation, conflict, and porosity” questioning and re-interpreting aspects of the modern, post-1920s anthropological understanding of culture.<sup>117</sup> It is maintained to be “less and less plausible to presume that cultures are self-contained and clearly bounded units, internally consistent and unified wholes of beliefs and values simply transmitted to every member of their respective groups as principles of social order.”<sup>118</sup> But where does Bonhoeffer himself fit in? To what extent did he remain caught in what is referred to as “high culture aestheticism”? In what ways did he join the ranks of cultural anthropologists in being misled “by the analogies they draw – to texts, organisms, or works of art”?<sup>119</sup> Tanner maintains that

“They have mistakenly read the presuppositions of their methods of approach into what they study. They have ignored or grossly underestimated evidence conflicting with presumptions of stasis and consensus. Their understanding of culture has been vitiated by associations with nationalism, colonialism, and the power plays of intellectual elites.”<sup>120</sup>

She argues that within the present postmodern critique most aspects of that modern understanding of culture “have just been decentered or reinscribed within a more primary attention to historical processes.”<sup>121</sup> Hence “Homogeneity, consistency, order, are no longer unempirical, a priori presumptions; sometimes they occur, sometimes they do not. They are temporary and provisional results, moreover, of historical processes that continue unabated.”<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, “Interconnections

among cultural elements, for example, are never so fixed that they cannot be broken apart and rearranged in the ongoing course of cultural process.”<sup>123</sup> As a consequence, while one might still work with the concept of cultures as wholes, “they are now considered contradictory and internally fissured wholes.”<sup>124</sup> Tanner’s argument that “Whether or not culture is a common focus of *agreement*, culture binds people together as a common focus for *engagement*,”<sup>125</sup> remains important in this respect. Tanner observes how “The differentiating function of the modern notion of culture is also retained in the postmodern version, but the account of cultural difference is modified substantially.”<sup>126</sup> Differences are therefore seen to be “not marked by boundaries separating self-contained cultures ...” Instead such boundaries may be crossed “without jeopardizing the distinctiveness of different cultures.”<sup>127</sup> And hence “The distinctiveness of cultural identity is ... not a product of isolation; it is not a matter of a culture’s being simply self-generated, pure and unmixed; it is not a matter of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’. Cultural identity becomes, instead, a hybrid, relational affair, something that lives between as much as within cultures.”<sup>128</sup>

It is along such an understanding of cultural identity that Schäffter’s four categories of experiencing of “Fremderfahrung” can be read as ways of constructing cultural identity “by means of such complex and ad hoc relational processes as resistance, appropriation, subversion, and compromise.”<sup>129</sup> And in that sense our contact perspective does not “presuppose ... sociocultural wholes subsequently brought into relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally, entering new relations through historical processes of displacement.”<sup>130</sup> As a consequence “terms such as ‘acculturation’ (with its overly linear trajectory: from culture A to culture B) or ‘syncretism’ (with its image of two clear systems overlaid)”<sup>131</sup> need to be revisited and problematized. Our reading of Bonhoeffer’s theological development in the light of his experiences of dwelling and travelling, of roots and routes will have to build on the insights of such contact approaches. Its implications for reading Bonhoeffer in post-colonial South Africa are complicated and prove theology to be deeply immersed in the troubles of cultural politics. Looking at our South African context it is not difficult to understand how “The notion of a contact zone, articulated by Pratt in contexts of European expansion and transculturation, can be extended to include cultural relations within the same state, region, or city – in the centers rather than the frontiers of nations and empires”, and illustrates how in the end “The distances at

issue here are more social than geographic.”<sup>132</sup> According to Clifford there is no “cure” for the troubles arising in the space of intercultural encounters: “There is only more translation.”<sup>133</sup> It is in this sense that together with Clifford I “do not accept that anyone is permanently fixed by his or her ‘identity’; but neither can one shed specific structures of race and culture, class and caste, gender and sexuality, environment and history.”<sup>134</sup>

Clifford’s notion of cultural translation and Pratt’s image of the contact zone come together in Duncan’s and Gregory’s definition of “travel writing as an act of translation that constantly works to produce a tense ‘space-in-between’.”<sup>135</sup> It suggests an understanding of travel writers as translators who in “re-presenting other cultures and other natures ... ‘translate’ one place into another, and in doing so constantly rub against the hubris that their own language-game contains the concepts necessary to represent another language-game.”<sup>136</sup> Taking its clues from the problems of textual translation Duncan and Gregory explain the intricate dialectics of cultural translation present in every travel writing:

Just as textual translation cannot capture all of the symbolic connotations of language or the alliterative sound of words, the translation of one place into the cultural idiom of another loses some of the symbolic loading of the place for its inhabitants and replaces it with other symbolic values. This means that translation entails both losses and gains, and as descriptions move from one place to another so they circulate in what we have called ‘a space in-between’. This space of translation is not a neutral surface and it is never innocent: it is shot through with relations of power and of desire.<sup>137</sup>

It is therefore pointed out that “translation is either a ‘domesticating method, an ethnographic reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bringing the author back home’ or a ‘foreignizing method, an ethnographic pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad’.”<sup>138</sup>

*Bonhoeffer the Tourist*

Bonhoeffer's early travels fall into the category of "tourism" which in the case of his trip to Rome comes close to a "pilgrimage". His encounters with the cultural "other" will have to be cast in relief against the background of the "classic quest – exoticist, anthropological, orientalist – for pure traditions and discrete cultural differences."<sup>139</sup> But at the same time a critical examination of Bonhoeffer the tourist will show how tourism, primarily associated with leisure time and privilege, also provides an opportunity to come into contact with "diaspora" "borderland", "immigration", "migrancy" and "exile". Kaplan's study conveys the expansion of the term "tourist" "from actual sightseer to a metasociological term to designate 'modern-man-in-general.'"<sup>140</sup> While I agree with Kaplan, that the tourist cannot – as suggested by some Euro-American critics – be universalized to stand for every subject position in modernity<sup>141</sup>, I still suggest that the notion of the tourist can function as an important lens for viewing certain structures of modernity and their continuation in what are considered post-colonial contexts.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, the tourist's constant traversing of boundaries – literally and figuratively – offers a powerful example and metaphor for what in post-colonial critique of travel writing is referred to as "desire and transgression".<sup>143</sup> In the crossing of boundaries the tourist is seen to participate in the creation of the same boundaries. For "an economic and social order that requires 'margins' and 'centers' will also require representation of those structural distinctions. The tourist confirms and legitimates the social reality of constructions such as "First" and "Third" Worlds, "development" and "underdevelopment," or "metropolitan" and "rural". And therefore, driven by a need to ascertain identity and location in a world that undermines the certainty of those categories, the tourist acts as an agent of modernity."<sup>144</sup>

In this respect Bonhoeffer's experiences of a tourist can be shown to pre- and postlude his early theological reflections on the notion of the "boundary" addressing the anthropological problem of desire and transgression in relation to notions of encounter and community. Bonhoeffer shared the tourist's desire to cross boundaries in order to expose himself to another culture. And yet he is also deeply aware of the need to acknowledge boundaries, which safeguard people's sense of cultural identity over against all hegemonic forms of transgression. He shares every tourist's hope "to surpass the superficialities of tourism to achieve 'a more profound appreciation of society and culture.'"<sup>145</sup> Such includes the desire "to 'see' or 'feel' differently", the

need "to escape for longer or shorter periods from a routine or mode of life that may be less than inspiring" and to "look to whatever trace of the past."<sup>146</sup> Tourists search for "new meanings in other locations, in other landscapes, cities, and social customs, 'even if they go home confirmed in their old meanings.'" It is a "process of mediating reality" in which "tourists search for verifiable markers of 'authenticity.'"<sup>147</sup> These markers include "a souvenir or photograph, developing relationships with indigenous people, documenting customs, manners, and landscapes, or learning a language ..."<sup>148</sup> Bonhoeffer made use of all these markers. In particular the friendships formed with some of the locals prove to have played an important role in the mediation of the foreign reality and his search for the authentic.

In order to further unfold the concept of authenticity Kaplan draws on Erving Goffman's concept of "front" and "back" regions, which highlights the notion of "staged authenticity" in travel writing:

stage 1 is the front region, the "kind of social space tourists attempt to overcome or get behind"; stage 2 is a touristic front region that appears to resemble a back region, even deliberately decorated as a back region for "atmosphere"; stage 3 is a front region that openly simulates a back region (this is the most ambiguous stage); stage 4 refers to a back region that is "open to outsiders"; stage 5 is a back region that is organized in recognition of visits from tourists; and stage 6 is the ultimate social space that motivates the traveler's imaginary, the ideal, uncontaminated back region.<sup>149</sup>

Bonhoeffer's reading of his early travels as a turning to reality illustrates this common search for essential authenticity in terms of those six stages. It links in with modernity's search for authenticity in response to a crisis in understanding and determining reality: "The photographic component of documenting a trip, the collection of souvenirs, the writing of postcards, the travel diary; these activities become part of a technology of documenting the 'real.' When tourists believe that they have found the ultimate 'real,' that they have attained the 'back' region, the need for proof is especially pressing."<sup>150</sup> Taking photographs did not seem to have been Bonhoeffer's primary medium to documenting reality. As far as I am aware there are only few references to actual picture taking and the few pictures that are available do not offer enough material to make any assumptions.<sup>151</sup> It was hence through letters

and diaries that Bonhoeffer, the amateur ethnographer, met this “need for proof”. These writings have to be interpreted as representational practices which are never free of power relations and involve “gaining possession of an experience,” “getting a grip on reality,” or expressing a partial viewpoint.<sup>152</sup>

### *The Genre of Travel Writing*

As I accompany Bonhoeffer, the youthful bourgeois voyager, it will be interesting to identify the particular cultural, political, and economic compulsions which determined the choice of his destinations. His visits to classic and catholic Rome, colonial Tripolis, Diaspora Barcelona and turbulent New York illustrate the great variety of movements and circumstances, denoting “a range of material, spatial practices that produce knowledge, stories, traditions, comportments, musics, books, diaries, and other cultural expressions.”<sup>153</sup> Reading through Bonhoeffer’s travel writings one has to therefore ask oneself if one hears “the voice of an individual writer, the voice of institutional authority, or of cultural ideology?”<sup>154</sup> As Spurr points out it is often not an either/or but all of these at the same time.<sup>155</sup> For perceptions of the other are always subject to the prefigurations and expectations of one’s home culture. Brenner maintains “daß zu den Wahrnehmungsbedingungen des Reisenden die “ideologischen Fesseln” gehören, “denen ganze Epochen, ganze Nationen oder soziale Schichten unterlagen ...”<sup>156</sup> One should therefore not be surprised if “die Reiseberichte zumindest im gleichen Maße Auskünfte über die Ausgangskultur der Reisenden und ihr ‘kulturelles Selbstverständnis’ wie über die Kultur der bereisten Regionen geben können.”<sup>157</sup> For when one examines the various individual and societal factors that shape perceptions and representations of the “other” it becomes clear that they are determined

durch den sozialen Status der Reisenden und durch ihre Einbindung in die Mentalität gesellschaftlicher Gruppen; sie hängen wesentlich ab vom technischen und organisatorischen Standard der Verkehrsmittel; und schließlich werden sie geprägt von persönlichen Dispositionen des Reisenden, die sich kristallisieren in seinem Bildungsstand, seinen Vorkenntnissen, seinen Interessen und seiner allgemeinen Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit.<sup>158</sup>

Our reading of Bonhoeffer's travel encounters draws on all those cultural expressions which in broad terms can be classified as travel writing. They can be understood as "vehicles whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other" typically dramatizing "an engagement between self and world ..."<sup>159</sup> While the compelling urge to describe one's journey has not diminished throughout history, the purpose and the style travel writings exhibit have evolved substantially over time. The genre includes "memoirs, journals, and ships' logs, as well as narratives of adventure, exploration, journey, and escape."<sup>160</sup> The journey is said to be one of the most persistent forms of all narratives following the ancient pattern of departure, adventure, and return. Examining the evolution and change within that genre Casey Blanton claims that "change comes ... at the nexus of the narrator's sense of him or herself as creator of a text and of the involvement with the "other" (as persons, places, and moral and aesthetic universes) about whom the text is written."<sup>161</sup> The purpose of travel shifting from political exploration or mercantile errands to travel for its own sake, Blanton notices, changes the nature of the narrator's place in the narrative: "At one end of the spectrum lie the object-bound journey accounts of sailors, pilgrims, and merchants whose trips were inspired by necessity or well-defined purpose: exploration, devotion, or economics."<sup>162</sup> The narrator's descriptions are perceived to be factual and disinterested with the narrators's thoughts and reactions all but hidden. "At the other end of the rather long and continuous line of travel accounts lie more explicitly autobiographical travel books that we have come to expect today as travel literature."<sup>163</sup> Referring to twentieth-century travel writers, Blanton illustrates how now "social and psychological issues are more important than facts about places and events. Sights and vistas may not be as central to the narratives as issues of religion, politics, and social behavior."<sup>164</sup> And at the center of these travel writings is "a mediating consciousness that monitors the journey, judges, thinks, confesses, changes, and even grows."<sup>165</sup> Blanton emphasizes that these two poles or types adopt different narrative strategies:

The impersonal journey narratives usually have a rather flat, linear structure – flat in the sense that there is no rising and falling action, no organizing dramatic strategy. The events are reported chronologically, following the itinerary of the trip. On the other hand, a more consciously crafted work of travel literature, while usually existing within



a chronological framework, often borrows from the world of fiction to establish motivation, rising and falling action, conflict, resolution, and character.<sup>166</sup>

Blanton points out that these two poles do not exist in any pure form, but constantly impinge upon one another. And yet, the distinction is important for "Genuine 'travel literature,' as opposed to what has been called 'pretravel,' depends upon a certain self-consciousness on the part of the narrator that was not seized upon until after the Renaissance and, in fact, not highly developed until the concern with 'sensibility' in the eighteenth century."<sup>167</sup> Attempting to catch the spirit of post-Enlightenment travel writings Blanton suggests several chief characteristics:

A narrator/traveler who travels for the sake of travel itself; a narrative style that borrows from fiction in its use of rising and falling action, character, and setting; a conscious commitment to represent the strange and exotic in ways that both familiarize and distance the foreign; a writerly concern with language and literature; and finally, thematic concerns that go beyond descriptions of people and places visited.<sup>168</sup>

Bonhoeffer's travel writings share features of both "pretravel" and "genuine" travel literature. They combine different narrative strategies weaving together thematic concerns and descriptions of people and places. In view of travel purpose his writings not only exhibit socio-political and theological interests but also the notion of travel for its own sake. While his style does not borrow from fiction, his North African sojourn clearly follows the ancient pattern of departure, exploration, and return. Interestingly, by the early nineteenth century, travel writing had become a record not only of discovery of others but also of discovery of self.<sup>169</sup> Due to the influence of the romantic period "the notion that the world and traveler could interact via the traveler's imagination" emerged.<sup>170</sup> Hence, one needed no longer a scientific or political reason for going abroad. As a result desire replaced duty as the motivation for travel.<sup>171</sup> In Bonhoeffer's case desire and duty overlapped. For his interest in other cultures was bound up with the disappointment about Western forms of Christianity and the desire to find the reality of God's revelation in Christ expressed in another culture. It was a desire which later on, due to his actual experiences abroad, matured into an understanding of travel as educational "duty" when he wonders: "Ob nicht die

Kenntnis anderer Länder und die innere Berührung mit ihnen für uns heute ein viel bedeutenderes Element der Bildung ist als die Antike?"<sup>172</sup>

Given his remark about the turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" it is rather puzzling that with the exception of, as we will see, some mandatory seminar readings during his stay in America we don't hear anything about Bonhoeffer reading newspapers. In view of his stay in Spain, Staats critically points out a detachedness from daily politics wondering: "Warum erfahren wir nichts von der vom spanischen König Alfons XIII. mitgetragenen Militärdiktatur unter General Primo de Rivera (Ministerpräsident von 1925-1930), nichts von den schweren Studentenunruhen bald nach Bonhoeffers Ankunft in Spanien, die im März 1928 die Schließung der Universitäten Madrid und Barcelona zur Folge hatten?"<sup>173</sup> It appears that Bonhoeffer predominantly relied on conversations with friends and relatives to inform himself. The regular exchange of letters, for example, was an important medium and reflects the increasingly scarce literary genre of letter writings as daily meditation through which one would form one's theological, philosophical, cultural and political judgment.<sup>174</sup>

In view of the relation between self and world, travel writing has always been haunted by Cartesian dualism and faced with the problem that "the dialectic between participation and distantiation, or discovery and creation, is always in danger of being collapsed toward one side or the other ..." <sup>175</sup> There is on the one side "the tendency toward idealism and the problem of the imperial self."<sup>176</sup> This is countered with "the tendency toward empiricism and the problem of the self's 'habitation' by the world."<sup>177</sup> This complex interplay between self and world signals the beginning of the richest period of travel writing, which is the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>178</sup> Bonhoeffer's travel writings therefore belong to the so-called heyday of travel literature, the period between World Wars I and II.<sup>179</sup> The mood of optimism so characteristic of the late nineteenth century dramatically changed creating an atmosphere in which travel writing flourished: "The horrors of the First World War altered the way many people thought about human progress. Along with the new century, the modern temper of doubt and anxiety was born. ... Dominated as it was by the mood of lost illusions and lost lives, this period produced writers who seemed to desert their homelands."<sup>180</sup> Travel writings from the 1920s and 1930s "found a way to

create metaphors about a shattered, anxious European world”, whereby travel itself became an important metaphor.<sup>181</sup> Blanton notices how the theme of self-discovery in view of the quest for wholeness was emphasized. For what was previously perceived as the “comfortable balance between self and world, between pleasure and duty enjoyed by late Victorian travel writers was thrown off kilter by the now insupportable idea of an essential self or a real world.”<sup>182</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s travel writings show how his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” also involves this quest for wholeness. But for Bonhoeffer it goes beyond mere self-discovery and includes the need to understand reality from a theological perspective. Ironically this general enthusiasm for exploration and travel set in at a point in time when, as Wolfgang Reif argues, there was really nothing left to explore, for the politics of European imperialism had already reached their climax around the turn to the twentieth century.<sup>183</sup> And yet, what is usually referred to as exoticism – the cultural phenomenon which exhibits “neben einer ästhetischen Faszination durch das Fremde die mehr oder weniger stark ausgeprägte Tendenz, das Fremde als Gegenwelt zur europäischen Zivilisation zu stilisieren”<sup>184</sup> — is said to have experienced a delay of 20 to 30 years in Germany compared to the rest of Europe. According to Reif this is due to “einer verzögerten politischen und industriellen Entwicklung Deutschlands bis zur Reichsgründung .... , das nach einer Phase industrieller Expansion in der Gründerzeit erst nach der Entlassung Bismarcks (1890) konsequente imperialistische “Weltpolitik” betreiben wollte, zu einem Zeitpunkt, als die Aufteilung der Erde unter die imperialistischen Mächte schon abgeschlossen war.”<sup>185</sup>

According to Blanton the critical response to travel literature can be divided into three types of analyses: historical overview, influence on other genres, and travel book as cultural study.<sup>186</sup> Our own study draws especially on cultural studies by anthropologists and literary critics who look at travel writing as ethnographic discourse and examine its complicity in colonial and neo-colonial practices. Mary Louise Pratt’s study of travel writings<sup>187</sup>, for example, shows how these narratives have helped to produce “ ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships at different points in Europe’s expansionist trajectory.”<sup>188</sup> She argues that “most bourgeois, scientific, commercial, aesthetic, travelers moved within highly determined circuits” and “can be ‘located’ on specific itineraries dictated by political, economic, and

intercultural global relations (often colonial, postcolonial, or neocolonial in nature) ...<sup>189</sup> Travel writings have therefore been identified as a mode of colonialist discourse that reinforces European norms. This is supported by David Spurr's rhetorical study of travel narratives which are shown to be one of those "discourses of colonialism" by which "one culture comes to interpret, to represent, and finally to dominate another ..."<sup>190</sup> I therefore deploy the term colonial discourse as "neither a monolithic system nor a finite set of texts; it may more accurately be described as the name for a series of colonizing discourses, each adapted to a specific historical situation, yet having in common certain elements with the others."<sup>191</sup> Colonial discourse is seen to belong "both to the classic colonial situation and the more elusive, more powerful forces of cultural hegemony in the postcolonial world."<sup>192</sup> The act of writing culture, then, is caught up in the complex web of power and violence and calls for a range of what Spurr describes as "imaginative and often nontraditional critical approaches."<sup>193</sup> Describing the process of how representation of violence became violence of representation Armstrong and Tennenhouse identify two modalities of violence which are seen to be intricately related: the violence of "that which is 'out there' in the world, as opposed to that which is exercised through words upon things in the world, often by attributing violence to them."<sup>194</sup>

Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys* on the other hand offers a historical introduction to what is poignantly described in the subtitle as *Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*.<sup>195</sup> Travel and travel writing are viewed as a kind of Freudian activity. Porter illustrates how "writing travellers put their fantasies on display often in spite of themselves. In one way or another, they are always writing about lives they want or do not want to live, the lost objects of their desire or the phobias that threaten to disable them ..."<sup>196</sup> His opening paragraph helps us to locate the genre one is dealing with ideologically and historically: "At best that heterogeneous corpus of works I am calling European travel writing has been an effort to overcome cultural distance through a protracted act of understanding. At worst it has been the vehicle for the expression of Eurocentric conceit or racist intolerance."<sup>197</sup> Yet, in either case, they have been "the vehicle by which our knowledge of things foreign has been mediated."<sup>198</sup> Bonhoeffer's travel writings represent both poles. They present us with "an effort to overcome cultural distance" as well as with "the vehicle for the expression of Eurocentric conceit ..."<sup>199</sup> They are writings which are preoccupied

with naming and describing, containing and conceptualizing, categorizing and representing the cultural “other”. It will be apparent how “in a literature so trained on looking to recognize in the foreign something familiar, the better to differentiate and control it later, representation becomes a strategy of survival.”<sup>200</sup>

### *“Surplus” and Experiences of Boundary*

Our reading of Bonhoeffer the “youthful grand tourist” and traveling theologian has to therefore consider a range of broader, continuously shifting narratives such as imperial/national and ecumenical/international. It is located within the field of postcolonial studies which have been gaining prominence since the 1970s. Discussions on “orientalism”, “alterity”, “the subaltern”, “hybridity”, “center/periphery” highlight the tremendous challenges the postcolonial era poses to doing theology and move theology’s interlocutors towards an interrogative and self-reflexive engagement with such notions as representation, identity, agency, discourse and history. It wrestles with alternatives to the dominant discourses of the colonial and neocolonial era by which cultural otherness is assimilated and consumed — captured so well in Schäffter’s first three categories of encounter.

In examining Bonhoeffer’s travel writings I follow Porter in referring to the verbal representations of the cultural “other” “as a ‘writing’ or as ‘transgression’ with relation to a given discursive regime.”<sup>201</sup> In line with Porter’s argument I read the word “writing” “as both with and without quotation marks, as discourse and antidiscourse, or in the idiom of Mikhail Bakhtin, as official and unofficial language.”<sup>202</sup> I thereby also follow Porter in his critique of the kind of discourse theory<sup>203</sup> deployed in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*<sup>204</sup> questioning Said’s argument that “no alternative to Orientalism, or its equivalent for other areas of the globe, is conceivable in the West.”<sup>205</sup> Porter’s in-depth reading of travel literature offers an alternative perspective crucial to our own analysis. He suggests that “the human subject’s relation to language is such that he or she is never merely a passive reflector of collective speech.”<sup>206</sup> We are said to “leave our individual mark in our written and spoken utterances in ways of which we are frequently aware, if at all, only after the fact.”<sup>207</sup> Porter therefore concludes: “Not only are the uses of an inherited language invariably overdetermined at the level of the individual, but natural languages

themselves provide the resources to loosen the constraints they also impose.”<sup>208</sup> This approach corresponds with Michel Foucault’s theoretical opening in his late works, in which he acknowledged the notion of a “‘surplus’ beyond that which, at any one time or place, we are in a position to perceive and record, and that one must devise strategies in order to illuminate some part of this surplus.”<sup>209</sup> But Said also moves closer to Porter’s approach, when concluding his survey of new approaches to the question of colonial and neocolonial discourse with the statement that “Exile, immigration, and the crossing of boundaries are experiences that can provide us with new narrative forms or, in John Berger’s phrase, *other* ways of telling ...”<sup>210</sup> Porter, of course, argues “that those ‘other ways of telling’ were already available in the heterogeneity of a great many multilayered texts.”<sup>211</sup>

Interestingly, in line with Porter Homi Bhabha also “suggested in his more recent writings that there is ambivalence and a potential for subversion in ... [colonial] discourse.”<sup>212</sup> In fact, Pratt’s “contact zones” resonate with Bhabha’s theoretical suggestions on the “in-between space” or the “interstices” where cultural difference is engaged. Her interstitial perspective poses questions of solidarity and community which are meant to nurture political empowerment and the enlargement of the multiculturalist cause.<sup>213</sup> By displaying and displacing “the binary logic through which identities of difference are often constructed” Bhabha attempts to open up “the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.”<sup>214</sup> Important to our analysis of Bonhoeffer’s travel encounters in those in-between spaces is the awareness “that the epistemological ‘limits’ of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices – women, the colonized, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities.”<sup>215</sup> It is in this sense that Bhabha envisions the boundary as “the place from which *something begins its presencing*”<sup>216</sup> and she encourages “a return to the performance of identity as iteration, the re-creation of the self in the world of travel ...”<sup>217</sup> The boundary conversely is established through the intervention of what she calls the “beyond” and resembles “a bridge, where ‘presencing’ begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world – the unhomeliness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations.”<sup>218</sup>

Porter's heterogeneity of multilayered texts, Foucault's notion of the "surplus", Said's "potential for subversion", Berger's "other ways of telling", and Bhabha's reflections on "enunciative boundaries" all attempt to capture the kind of encounter that Schäffter describes in his fourth category of experiencing "Eigenheit und Fremdheit als Zusammenspiel sich wechselseitig hervorrufender Konstrastierungen." At the heart of such an experience of "Fremdheit" is a radical experience of the boundary: "Fremdheit macht den 'blinden Fleck' der eigenen Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit erkennbar und wird so zur mühevollen Erfahrung einer gegenseitigen Grenze."<sup>219</sup> The boundary signifies the moment of suddenly understanding that one does not understand. This approach counters the radical scepticism of early discourse theory, which assumes that there are no alternatives to assimilating and dominating otherness. It challenges the claim that we are ultimately "the prisoners of ... [our] own authoritative images and linguistic protocol ..."<sup>220</sup> And it suggests that we can escape "procedures of dichotomizing, restructuring, and textualizing in the making of interpretive statements about foreign cultures and traditions ..."<sup>221</sup> At the same time its emphasis on genuine experiences of the boundary offers a powerful critique of the kind of transcendent humanist standard from which Said attacks Orientalism. Said's position, as Clifford pinpoints, suggests "a familiar set of values associated with the Western anthropological human sciences – existential standards of 'human encounter' and vague recommendations of 'personal, authentic, sympathetic, humanistic knowledge'."<sup>222</sup> But it is "a general feature of humanist common denominators that they are meaningless, since they bypass the local cultural codes that make personal experience articulate."<sup>223</sup> And in this sense Said is seen "to endorse the anthropological commonplace that 'the more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment *and* generosity necessary for true vision'."<sup>224</sup> Clifford therefore poignantly asks if our ideas of relationality should be drawn from "the [humanist] metaphors of conversation, hospitality, and exchange" or if we should not prefer "the figures of military maneuver sometimes invoked by Foucault."<sup>225</sup> Our reading of genuine encounter in terms of Schäffter's radical notion of "Grenzerfahrung" – navigating between the repressive alternatives of universalism and separatism – is certainly closer to Foucault's "figures of military maneuver" emphasizing alterity, strangeness and non-understanding.

Such an understanding of encounter also resonates with the kind of realism that transpires from Bonhoeffer's "theological geography of the boundary". It encourages theologically informed strategies which are able to illuminate some part of Foucault's "surplus". Bonhoeffer himself, in fact, talks about a "Rest" when pondering the hermeneutical implications of his encounter with the American "other".<sup>226</sup> The central notion of the boundary in his theological writings goes hand in hand with a radical critique of idealism's knowing I and thereby corresponds with Bhabha's recognition of the epistemological limits of ethnocentric ideas. Bhabha's enunciative character of the boundary, envisioned as the place from which something begins its presencing and established through the intervention of the "beyond", is open to Bonhoeffer's christological reading of the boundary. And Bhabha's unhomeliness as the condition of cross-cultural initiations resembles the journeys without return of the Christian pilgrim as intimated in Bonhoeffer's Barcelona sermons. Bhabha's enunciative boundaries therefore encourage a careful examination of Bonhoeffer's contact zones in the task of reconstructing our narrative identities in view of alternative memories and cultural experiences. It opens us up to the "interlacing rhythms of remembering, of telling, of suffering, of ideology critique, of new voices, experiences, expressions ..."<sup>227</sup> Chopp maintains that such rhythms have the potential to critically reshape one's narrative identity which she defines as the "'we', the story we tell ourselves that defines our 'we'" providing us with "our fundamental assumptions, our images upon which we build our norms, our values such as courage, respect, dignity, and compassion."<sup>228</sup>

Theo Sundermeier observes how in modern times the encounter with the cultural "other" represented the exceptional case of encounter with the "other" as such.<sup>229</sup> Today, in contrast, from being the privilege of only a small elite of world citizens, intercultural experiences have, at least in Europe's major cities, become everyday reality almost equating the "other" with the cultural "other".<sup>230</sup> In our own particular context of post-Apartheid South Africa the direct encounter of the various cultures once kept apart has entered a new phase of negotiating cultural identities across ethnic and socio-economic divides. Furthermore to talk about the importance of acknowledging difference carries very distinct connotations depending on one's context. The legacy of colonialism and Apartheid forces us to look very carefully into the politics of difference, especially when propagated as the need to celebrate



difference. Postcolonial critics are quick to point out how easily such rhetoric can re-inforce old divides or how the propagation of multi-culturalism can mask new versions of European cosmopolitanism. We must be sensitive then to the question of whether such dialogue with Bonhoeffer does not display another site of cultural control, privileging Western ways of theological knowledge production and dissemination.

<sup>1</sup> Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Aleida Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," in *The Translatability of Cultures: Figures of the Space Between*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 97.

<sup>3</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 97.

<sup>4</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 98-99.

<sup>5</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 98.

<sup>6</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 97. Assmann highlights the different forms of universalism: "They are sacred or secular, institutional or spiritual, hegemonic or subversive. But they all worship the One. Whether as a political goal or as a spiritual event, whether as a hegemonic claim or as a hidden mystery, the One is the unrivaled hero of all universalisms." Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 98.

<sup>7</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 98. Spengler's disregard of the human spirit, hence, is blamed for "a theory according to which cultures evolve and decline according to strict morphological laws. These mechanisms take place in their own separate spheres; there are no interactions, translations, communications. The borderlines are without windows, there is no network of traffic, no contract, no correspondence. ... The only thing that the individual cultures share are the inexorable laws of growth and decline. Otherwise they are totally separate in their essences." Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 98.

<sup>8</sup> We read the "post" in postcolonial "as signifying both changes in power structures after the official end of colonialism as well as colonialism's continuing effects, particularly as they are manifested discursively ..." Padmini Mongia, *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory* (London: Arnold, 1996), 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 99.

<sup>10</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 98-99.

<sup>11</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 99.

<sup>12</sup> David Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, Concilium Series (New York; London: Orbis Books; SCM Press, 1994), 20.

<sup>13</sup> Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 296. Bernstein is quotes as arguing: "These questions are at the heart of the work of Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, Foucault, Derrida, Lévinas, Loytard, and many others." Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 296. Bernstein especially refers to Michael Theunissen's classic study *Der Andere*. Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 295.

<sup>15</sup> Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 298. Though Bernstein concedes that "Hegel can be read as systematically ambiguous, because his solution to the problem of the one and the many, identity and difference, the same and the other is so unstable that he is open to so many diverse interpretations and criticisms. Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Adorno, Derrida, and Lévinas - in radically different ways - challenge and question the very idea of a Hegelian *aufheben* in which identity and difference are reconciled." Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 297.

<sup>16</sup> Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 307.

<sup>18</sup> Tracy, *On Naming the Present. Reflections on God, Hermeneutics, and Church*, 16.

- <sup>19</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>20</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>21</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>22</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>23</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>24</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>25</sup> Assmann, "The Curse and Blessing of Babel; or, Looking Back on Universalism," 100.
- <sup>26</sup> James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London; England: Harvard University Press, 1997), 7.
- <sup>27</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 7.
- <sup>28</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Die Spur Des Anderen. Untersuchungen Zur Phänomenologie und Sozialphilosophie*, 1983, edited and translated by Wolfgang Nikolaus Krewani, Third (Freiburg (Breisgau); München: Alber, 1998).
- <sup>29</sup> Lévinas, *Die Spur Des Anderen. Untersuchungen Zur Phänomenologie und Sozialphilosophie*, 215-16.
- <sup>30</sup> Theo Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1996), 64.
- <sup>31</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 64.
- <sup>32</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 64. Sundermeier hereby rearranges the terms, which Lévinas himself employs for his characterization of "Bewußtseinsontologie".
- <sup>33</sup> Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Introduction," in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, Critical Views (London: Reaction Books, 1999), 9. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés maintain that "the literary creation of the *Odyssey* – whose portrait of a great journey home after the Trojan War was not only the very first major text in the European tradition (along with the *Iliad*) but also remains Antiquity's most famous book of travels ..." Elsner and Rubiés, "Introduction," 8. And in this respect it is of great significance "that the allegory of travel as a path of salvation within ancient philosophical writing (and particularly in the Neoplatonic school inaugurated by Plotinus) antedates the adoption of Christianity as the dominant religion of the Roman empire." Elsner and Rubiés, "Introduction," 8.
- <sup>34</sup> Ortfried Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schöffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 11-42.
- <sup>35</sup> Johannes Graf, "Die Notwendige Reise." *Reisen und Reiseliteratur Junger Autoren Während Des Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart: M und P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1995), 12, footnote 3.
- <sup>36</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 13.
- <sup>37</sup> Roy Sommer, "Fremdverstehen," in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie: Ansätze - Personen - Grundbegriffe*, ed. Ansgar Nünning (Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler, 1998), 164.
- <sup>38</sup> Sommer, "Fremdverstehen," 164.
- <sup>39</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*.
- <sup>40</sup> In the light of his evaluation of three Western strands of critical reflection on encounter, — the ethnological perspective, the perspective of history of art, and the philosophical one — Sundermeier identifies three basic models of encounter: (1) the "Gleichheitsmodell", (2) the "Alteritätsmodell" and (3) the "Komplementaritätsmodell".
- <sup>41</sup> It is noteworthy that Sundermeier suggests a particular hermeneutical method of interpreting art as one of the most promising perspectives, even though it is said to lack "eine Anleitung zum Handeln." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 45,76. "Germanistik" and "Pädagogik" are also recognized to have concerned themselves from early on with the interpretation and reception of texts from other cultures. But their perspective is not included in Sundermeier's study since their focus on the didactic aspects of encounter is understood to follow and not precede hermeneutical considerations. Psychological insights are also sidelined because of their fundamentally self-reflexive approach which is seen to represent a major issue in the philosophical debate. Sundermeier criticizes that psychology reduces the foreigner to a mere projection of the self: "Der Fremde ist nicht nur Spiegel meiner selbst. Er darf nicht als Umweg zur Selbstfindung mißbraucht werden. Fremdenhaß ist nicht nur verdrängter oder projizierter Selbsthaß." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 10. His critique includes Julia Kristeva's *Fremde sind wir uns selbst* (Frankfurt: 1990) and Paul Ricoeur's *Das Selbst als ein Anderer* (München 1995).
- <sup>42</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 13. He contrasts his own hermeneutical approach with the following other approaches: "Die klassische Hermeneutik kann als

Vereinnahmungshermeneutik bezeichnet werden. Ihr geht es darum, dem Leser soviel Verstehenshilfen zu geben, bis er den fremden Text sich zu eigen machen, ja, sich gleichsam als sein Autor verstehen kann. H.-G. Gadammers *Verschmelzungshermeneutik* führt darüber hinaus, indem sie nicht nur das Verstehen von Texten, sondern auch von Menschen intendiert und das Subjektsein des Gegenübers ernstnimmt. Vom verstehenden Subjekt, aber doch auch vom Gegenüber werden gegenseitige Annäherungen erwartet. Das Verstehen ist im Idealfall zum Ziel gekommen, wenn die unterschiedlichen Perspektiven identisch werden und die Horizonte verschmelzen. Für das von uns heute geforderte Verstehen des Fremden ist dieser Ansatz nicht zureichend. Unser Welthorizont ist 'multidimensional' geworden, wie es gelegentlich heißt." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 12-13.

<sup>43</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Sundermeier argues: "Die Religionen sind überall so etwas wie der innere Motor einer Gesellschaft. Ob sie heute die Kraft haben, das Bewußtsein einer Gesellschaft im Blick auf den Umgang mit den Fremden zu verändern, mag offen sein, eine Veränderung ist jedoch langfristig nicht gegen sie zu erreichen." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 11. Interestingly, Dieter Lenzen describes the Western phenomenon of "Ausländerfeindlichkeit" as an expression of a modern crisis of motivation created by secularization and increasing competition on the job market. Contemporary attempts to fill this gap of motivation are being radically dismissed as ineffective. Especially Lenzen's dismissal of the notion "Bereicherung" is a helpful critique of rather romantic concepts of encounter: "In diese Motivationslücke versuchen, eher naiv als effektiv, multikulturelle Versprechungen vom Typus der 'Bereicherung' zu stoßen, die her auf immaterielle Güter zielen wie 'Erfahrung der anderen Kultur' oder ähnliches. Dieses Versprechen muß aber wirkungslos bleiben, weil ein erheblicher Teil unserer Bevölkerung diesen Bedarf entweder gar nicht hat, ihn symbolisch durch Fernsehreportagen über fremde Kulturen oder durch Pauschalarrangements von TUI befriedigt, oder weil der Preis, zum Beispiel der Verlust des eigenen Arbeitsplatzes, dafür als zu hoch angesehen wird. Hinzu kommt, daß, wie wir gehört haben, die Theorie von der multikulturellen Gesellschaft gleichzeitig mit der Maxime verknüpft wird, alle Kulturen seien gleichwertig, so daß also eine Bereicherung auf Kosten der anderen nicht in Betracht kommt." Dieter Lenzen, "Multikulturalität Als Monokultur," in *Das Fremde*, ed. Ortfried Schäffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 152.

<sup>46</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 11.

<sup>47</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 11.

<sup>48</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 12.

<sup>49</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 12.

<sup>50</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 12.

<sup>51</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," I.

<sup>52</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 7.

<sup>53</sup> Schäffter explains: "Mit zunehmender Durchlässigkeit der politischen und sozialen Grenzen und einer sich steigernden globalen Mobilität werden auch die Möglichkeiten zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem 'konkreten Fremden', d.h. mit seiner ernüchternden Alltäglichkeit vielfältiger. Wenn lange Zeit die Vorstellung vorherrschen konnte, daß 'die Fremde' vorwiegend räumlich außerhalb des eigenen Lebenshorizonts anzusiedeln sei, so gerät sie uns heute bereits auf vielfältige und oft sonderbare Weise 'unter die Haut'." Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 7.

<sup>54</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 13.

<sup>55</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 13.

<sup>56</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 15.

<sup>57</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 15.

<sup>58</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 15.

<sup>59</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 24. Bonhoeffer writes to his mother, Paula Bonhoeffer: "Die Leute erzählen sich von dem Berg, - übrigens grade der, auf dem ich den Sonnenuntergang sah - daß auf ihm der Teufel Jesus versucht habe und ihm die Welt gezeigt habe und dann gesagt habe: dies alles tibi dabo (will ich dir geben) ... und daher der Name komme, und diese Etymologie hat schon ihr gewisses Recht." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 34.

<sup>60</sup> David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1993), 13.

- <sup>61</sup> Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Post-Contemporary Interventions, ed. Stanley Fish and Frederic Jameson (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), 1.
- <sup>62</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 14.
- <sup>63</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 13.
- <sup>64</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 15.
- <sup>65</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 15.
- <sup>66</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 15.
- <sup>67</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>68</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>69</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>70</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>71</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>72</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>73</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16.
- <sup>74</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 16. Spurr maintains: "The gaze is never innocent or pure, never free of mediation by motives which may be judged noble or otherwise. The writer's eye is always in some sense colonizing the landscape, mastering and portioning, fixing zones and poles, arranging and deepening the scene as the object of desire." Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 27.
- <sup>75</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 14.
- <sup>76</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 17.
- <sup>77</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 609.
- <sup>78</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 19.
- <sup>79</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 27.
- <sup>80</sup> Keith W. Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1984), 24.
- <sup>81</sup> Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 24.
- <sup>82</sup> Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr., "Theology and the Dialectics of Otherness. Epistemology, Sociality and Ethics in Bonhoeffer's Act and Being and Adorno's Negative Dialectics" (Ph. D. diss., Emory, 1985), 115.
- <sup>83</sup> John A. Moses, "Bonhoeffer's Germany: The Political Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. John W. de Gruchy (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 3-21.
- <sup>84</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 1.
- <sup>85</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 1.
- <sup>86</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 1-2.
- <sup>87</sup> Musa W. Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, ed. Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2000), 150.
- <sup>88</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 5.
- <sup>89</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 2.
- <sup>90</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 2.

<sup>91</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 2.

<sup>93</sup> Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 150.

<sup>94</sup> Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 153.

<sup>95</sup> Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 154.

<sup>96</sup> Dube continues to explain: "I travelled for education to the countries of those whose hi-stories of travel have marked them down as powerful. I travelled for education to countries of those whose stories of travel have inscribed them as powerful specialists and marketers of their languages and knowledge. Upon arrival, I was a powerless traveller and guest. Unlike travellers and guests that many Southern African people have encountered, I had no power over my hosts/hostesses. In both cases, I was a student with limited power over the contents and requirements of my programmes. The bulk of what I learnt was wonderful, but did not always have direct relevance to my Southern African context, and most of what I had learnt in my own home, could not be applicable during the period of my study. Nevertheless, my travel and stay in USA was one of the most instructive journeys of self-discovery." Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 154.

<sup>97</sup> Dube expands on her experiences abroad: "On the TV, Africa was the emaciated children of Somalia, the Zulu people shaking and raising their traditional weapons, the Mozambique war-ravaged kids begging for food, Liberian kids carrying guns and killing each other, the Rwanda and Burundi genocide, the terror of *Ebola*, AIDS, Zaire becoming The Republic of Democratic Congo; etc. In the movies Africa was 'Out of Africa,' 'The Gods of Must be Crazy,' 'Coming to America,' 'Far Away Places,' 'Outbreak,' etc. My point here is not to question the authenticity of TV reports. Rather, my point is that I came to discover that the media constructs the story of Africa in a "cut and paste" method which writes Africa as a story of war, backwardness, poverty, disease, and death. Africa is presented as a wholly negative space with no normal life or anything positive. ... With this selective coverage of news, Africa can only appear as a negative place." Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 155.

<sup>98</sup> Dube presents the following dilemma: "Like many people of Southern Africa I had to associate myself with the stories of the powerful (like getting educated in the West) in order to be given power. The story-maps of black Southern African travellers, who fled from Mfecane, Boer trekkers, and English settlers, fought for independence and who are now being trammelled by global economic tremors, are narrative plots of disadvantaged travellers and hosts/hostesses, when compared to the story-maps of white settlers of the Cape, Boer trekkers, and colonists of Southern Africa, and Africa at large. These travellers had power, and still maintain power, over their host/hostess. Euro-American white travellers who come to our countries and region as business people, students, or professionals are usually privileged and powerful; Black African people who travel to Europe and North America are usually disadvantaged, regardless of their qualifications." Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 155.

<sup>99</sup> Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 155.

<sup>100</sup> Dube, "BATSWAKWA: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)," 162.

<sup>101</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 35.

<sup>102</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 3.

<sup>103</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 2.

<sup>105</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 35.

<sup>106</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 4. Explaining the origin of this term Pratt writes: "I borrow the term 'contact' here from its use in linguistics, where the term contact language refers to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in a context of trade. Such languages begin as pidgins, and are called creoles when they come to have native speakers of their own." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 7.

<sup>107</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 7. It is along this line of thinking that Homi Bhabha developed Bakhtin's linguistic concept of hybridity into an intercultural symbol. In connection with Lacan's psychoanalysis and Derrida's *différance* Bhabha conceives cultural contacts no longer in essentialist or dualistic terms, but he envisions a "Third Space", an "in-between", hybrid space in which all cultural statements are constructed. It is therefore, according to Ben Beya, "in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or *cultural value* are negotiated." Abdennebi Ben Beya, "Hybridity," <www.shef.ac.uk/~bsp98ss/hybrid.htm.>, 1998.

- <sup>108</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 39. Cf. Clifford's discussion on why he prefers "travel" to other terms as "displacement", "nomadism" or "pilgrimage". Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 39.
- <sup>109</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 39.
- <sup>110</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 39.
- <sup>111</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 11.
- <sup>112</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 11.
- <sup>113</sup> Clifford's approach argues against the way anthropology has privileged relations of dwelling over relations of travel in the twentieth-century. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 22.
- <sup>114</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 25.
- <sup>115</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 25. James Boon's ethnological findings about Balinese culture, for example, highlight the need for developing new representational strategies: "What has come to be called Balinese culture is a multiple authored invention, a historical formation, an enactment, a political construct, a shifting paradox, an ongoing translation, an emblem, a trademark, a nonconsensual negotiation of contrastive identity, and more..." Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 24.
- <sup>116</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 7.
- <sup>117</sup> Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 38. Tanner's analysis of the history of the notion of culture and its historical development sums up the central aspects of the anthropological notion of culture and engages its increasing criticism. Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*.
- <sup>118</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 38.
- <sup>119</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 38.
- <sup>120</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 38.
- <sup>121</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 56.
- <sup>122</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 56.
- <sup>123</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 56.
- <sup>124</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 57.
- <sup>125</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 57. The dynamics of such engagement are described as follows: "The struggle over culture, whether and to whatever extent it produces true commonality of beliefs and sentiments, presumes culture as common stakes: all parties at least agree on the importance of the cultural items that they struggle to define and connect up with one another. Participants are bound together by a common attachment to or investment in such cultural items, and not necessarily by any common understanding of what they mean." Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 57.
- <sup>126</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 57.
- <sup>127</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 57.
- <sup>128</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 58.
- <sup>129</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, 58.
- <sup>130</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 7.
- <sup>131</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 7.
- <sup>132</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 204.
- <sup>133</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 13.
- <sup>134</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 12.
- <sup>135</sup> James Duncan and Derek Gregory, "Introduction," in *Writes of Passage*, ed. James Duncan and Derek Gregory (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 4.
- <sup>136</sup> Duncan and Gregory, "Introduction," 4.
- <sup>137</sup> Duncan and Gregory, "Introduction," 4-5.
- <sup>138</sup> Duncan and Gregory, "Introduction," 5.
- <sup>139</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 5. Graf argues in a similar vein referring to a study by Hans Magnus Enzensberger: "[Er] sieht das moderne Reisen gekoppelt an das im Prozeß der beginnenden Modernisierung der Gesellschaft gewandelte Natur- und Geschichtsverständnis seit dem 18. Jahrhundert, wenn er den Wunsch nach Rückkehr in unberührte Natur und Geschichte als Leitbilder des Tourismus bestimmt." Graf, "Die Notwendige Reise." *Reisen und Reiseliteratur Junger Autoren Während Des Nationalsozialismus*, 14.
- <sup>140</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 58.
- <sup>141</sup> Even though Kaplan also acknowledges how "posing the modern subject as a tourist destabilizes the elitist formations of some forms of cultural modernisms and demands a more historically specific,

economically grounded theory of cultural production." Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 57.

<sup>142</sup> Kaplan refers to critics that have made tourism the vantage point of modernity: "Drawing upon structuralist methodologies and focusing more specifically on economic exchange and cultures of consumerism than aesthetic concerns, the theorists who privilege tourism seek to account for the rootlessness and anomie of modern, urban life through recourse to a powerful metaphor of travel." Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 57.

<sup>143</sup> Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton; New Jersey: Princeton university press, 1991).

<sup>144</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 58.

<sup>145</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 59.

<sup>146</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 59.

<sup>147</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 60.

<sup>148</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 60.

<sup>149</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 60.

<sup>150</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 61.

<sup>151</sup> Renate Bethge had kindly shown me some of the pictures that her late husband Eberhard Bethge was able to preserve.

<sup>152</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 61.

<sup>153</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 35.

<sup>154</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 11.

<sup>155</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 11.

<sup>156</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 15.

<sup>157</sup> Peter Brenner, *Der Reisebericht. Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der Deutschen Literatur* (Frankfurt Am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), 15.

<sup>158</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht. Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der Deutschen Literatur*, 27.

<sup>159</sup> Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, Studies in Literary Themes and Genres, ed. Ronald Gottesman, vol. 15 (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1997), Xi. A comprehensive analysis of the genre of travel writing is impossible in the light of the magnitude of studies on travel writing and the variety of methodologies applied. Apart from Casey Blanton's work Peter Brenner's study offers a helpful overview of the history of travel writing. Peter J Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Internationales Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte der Deutschen Literatur, ed. Wolfgang Frühwald and , no. 2. Sonderheft (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1990).

<sup>160</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 2.

<sup>161</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, Xii. Blanton is, of course, aware of "the danger of drawing too neat an evolutionary pattern, of using broad inclusionary terms, and inevitably leaving out the 'little histories.'" Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, Xii.

<sup>162</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 3.

<sup>163</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 4.

<sup>164</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 4.

<sup>165</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 4.

<sup>166</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 4.

<sup>167</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 4.

<sup>168</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 5.

<sup>169</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 15.

<sup>170</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 16.

<sup>171</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 16.

<sup>172</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 354.

<sup>173</sup> Reinhart Staats, "Nachwort," in *Barcelona, Berlin, Amerika 1928-1931*, ed. Reinhart Staats and Hans Christoph von Hase, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 609.

<sup>174</sup> Staats, "Nachwort," 609.

<sup>175</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 16.

<sup>176</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 16.

<sup>177</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 16.

<sup>178</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 19. Blanton introduces the reader to the great depth and breadth of travel books that appeared between 1850 and 1930.

<sup>179</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, Xiii. In his historical overview Blanton looks at travel literature's long and honorable history: "Early travelers' accounts like those of Herodotus (*History of the Persian Wars*, ca. 440 B.C.E.), Strabo (*Geographica*, ca. 23 C.E.), and Pausanias (*Guide to Greece*, ca. 170 C.E.) are evidence of a vigorous nascent genre. These narratives and the ones that follow them render in words the strange, the exotic, the dangerous, and the inexplicable: they convey information about geography as well as human nature; they try ... to tell a kind of truth that paradoxically may be untellable." Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 2.

<sup>180</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 20-21. Looking more specifically at "Reiseliteratur in der Weimarer Republik" Anke Gleber observes how the culture of the 1920's is shaped by the experience of the city: "Ihre Reisenden kommen aus Berlin: Kerr, Kisch, Toller, Benjamin, Tucholsky. Sie reisen auf den Spuren des Flaneurs, und die Stadt als Paradigma der Moderne bestimmt ihre Reiseerfahrung ..." Anke Gleber, "Die Erfahrung der Moderne in der Stadt," in *Reiseliteratur der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Peter Brenner (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), 463. Their travel experiences are documented in a variety of forms: "als Tagebuch, kulturkritischer Essay und sozialkritische Reportage, als subjektives Stimmungs- oder philosophisches Denkbild." Gleber, "Die Erfahrung der Moderne in der Stadt," 463. Their role as modern "Flaneurs" is succinctly captured: "Wenn die Berliner Reisenden in der Fremde ankommen, bringen sie die Kategorien ihrer städtischen Alltagserfahrung mit. Ihre Sensibilität für die Wahrnehmung moderner Stadtlandschaften läßt sich auch auf die Reize der fremden Stadt richten. Die Stadt "ist nicht mehr Heimat. Sie ist Schauplatz und Fremde", und damit jeder Gang durch die Stadt eine Reise in die Wahrnehmung der Moderne. Moderne Flaneure – der Voyageur als Flaneur – sind diese Reisenden nicht nur in der Phänomenologie ihrer differenzierten Wahrnehmung; als Journalisten lassen sie sich auch soziologisch als Nachfolger des Flaneurs im 20. Jahrhunderts definieren." Gleber, "Die Erfahrung der Moderne in der Stadt," 463.

<sup>181</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 59.

<sup>182</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 21. Blanton observes: "The fragmentation of the self and the subsequent quest for wholeness explored in the works of Eliot, Joyce, Georges Braque, and Pablo Picasso appear in varying degrees in the travel writing of the early twentieth century. Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 21.

<sup>183</sup> Reif explains: "Spätestens mit den technisch perfektionierten Afrikaexpeditionen Stanleys (seit 1871) begann der Mythos vom "dunklen Erdteil" zu verblassen. Bereits 1885, nach der Berliner Kongokonferenz, war auch noch der letzte, am wenigsten zu verwertende Winkel dieses unerschlossenen Kontinents unter die imperialistischen Mächte Europas aufgeteilt. Um 1900 war mit der Aufteilung Chinas in Interessensphären der bereits mit den Entdeckungsreisen des 15. Jahrhunderts einsetzende Prozeß der Europäisierung der Erde weitgehend zum Abschluß gebracht worden. Schiffs-, Eisenbahnlinien und Fernstraßen verbanden die Kontinente mit den Zentren der westlichen Mächte und ermöglichten es den Handelsgesellschaften, Kolonialbeamten und Missionaren, den Prozeß der wirtschaftlichen Ausbeutung und soziokulturellen Enteignung und Nivellierung voranzutreiben." Wolfgang Reif, "Exotismus Im Reisebericht Des Frühen 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Der Reisebericht: Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der Deutschen Literatur*, ed. Peter Brenner (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), 435.

<sup>184</sup> Reif, "Exotismus Im Reisebericht Des Frühen 20. Jahrhunderts," 437.

<sup>185</sup> Reif, "Exotismus Im Reisebericht Des Frühen 20. Jahrhunderts," 437.

<sup>186</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing. The Self and the World*, 120.

<sup>187</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*.

<sup>188</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 5.

<sup>189</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 35.

<sup>190</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 4.

<sup>191</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 1-2.

<sup>192</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 6.

<sup>193</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 2. Looking at the English-speaking world alone Spurr identifies the following key theorists in view of Orientalist, Africanist, and primitivist discourse: "Edward Said, Christopher Miller,



and Patrick Brantlinger have examined the discourse of colonialism primarily in canonical works of English and French literature, and in popular adventure works. James Clifford and Marianna Torgnovick have written provocatively on the connections between twentieth-century literature, art, and ethnography. Mary Louise Pratt has written a comprehensive study of travel writing as part of history of European imperialism since the Renaissance. Sara Suleri has studied the rhetoric of the British in India. Ashis Nandy has given new life to the study of the psychology of colonization. Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have helped to formulate theoretical models for what promises to be an ever-renewing intellectual project." Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 2.

<sup>194</sup> Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, "Introduction: Representing Violence, or 'How the West Was Won'," in *The Violence of Representation*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *Essays in Literature and Society*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1989), 9.

<sup>195</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*.

<sup>196</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 13. Porter's insights on the problems of representation and the Foucaultian nexus of power and knowledge have been informative for my reading of Bonhoeffer's travel writings.

<sup>197</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 1.

<sup>198</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 1.

<sup>199</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 1.

<sup>200</sup> Sarah Warner, "Early Travel Writing," seminar paper, Cape Town, March 1999, 1.

<sup>201</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*.

<sup>202</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 7.

<sup>203</sup> Using the term in a Foucaultian sense Porter briefly highlights some of its key aspects relevant also to my own analysis: "Discourse was defined as a form of violence done to the world and its inhabitants, including notably its human inhabitants. Thus, more systematically than Nietzsche, Foucault asserted not the traditional opposition between truth and politics, knowledge and power, but a complicity. And in his detailed, historical studies of 'the dubious sciences' in particular, he showed how such complicity was maintained through material as well as discursive practices and their institutional supports. It was out of such a critique that there emerged the fused concept 'power/knowledge'." Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 4.

<sup>204</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978). Porter sums up Said's definition of "Orientalism" as "'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' ... or a Western hegemonic discourse dependent on 'a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, historical, and philosophical texts' ..." Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 3, footnote 1.

<sup>205</sup> Porter explains: "If articulate language is a collective enterprise of the kind Said describes, then the individual is not free to write against the discursive grain, but is bound by an already constituted system of utterances. In short, in all our representations of things foreign, a knowledge – as opposed to an ideology – of the Other is impossible." Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 4.

<sup>206</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 4.

<sup>207</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 4.

<sup>208</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 4.

<sup>209</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 5. Porter in detail explains how "In his reflections on the possibility of a modern ethics, he [Foucault], in effect, came to advocate a form of living that was an experimentation at and beyond established limits. In place of that obliteration of otherness, which is implied by radical discourse theory, he came to argue for exploration and self-transformation through a dialogic engagement with alien modes of life." Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 5.

<sup>210</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 5, footnote 4.

<sup>211</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 5, footnote 4.

<sup>212</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 5, footnote 4.

<sup>213</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 3.

<sup>214</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 4.

<sup>215</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 5.

<sup>216</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 5.

<sup>217</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9.

<sup>218</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9.

<sup>219</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>220</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 12.

<sup>221</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 216.

<sup>222</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 197. Clifford rightly observes that "Said's humanist perspectives do not harmonize with his use of methods derived from Foucault, who is of course a radical critic of humanism." Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 264. In fact, Said's "privilege of standing above cultural particularism, of aspiring to the universalist power that speaks for humanity, for the universal experiences of love, work, death, and so on, is a privilege invented by a totalizing Western liberalism." Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 262.

<sup>223</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 263.

<sup>224</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 263.

<sup>225</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 263.

<sup>226</sup> See chapter on America.

<sup>227</sup> Rebecca Chopp, "Reimagining Public Discourse," paper presented at the Academic Workshop, 30 September Cape Town, 1998, 3.

<sup>228</sup> Chopp, "Reimagining Public Discourse," 2.

<sup>229</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 72. We follow Sundermeier in his definition of "Fremder" when he explains: "'Fremder' wird hier als geographisch und kulturell bestimmter Distinktionsbegriff gebraucht und bezeichnet denjenigen, der von außerhalb des eigenen Wohnraumes und Staates kommt und kulturell anders geprägt ist, also der Ausländer, der zum Gast wird ..." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 72.

<sup>230</sup> Sundermeier observes the following historical changes: "Das hat mit der literarischen Ausgangslage des vorigen und dieses Jahrhunderts zu tun. Der Fremde wurde nicht thematisiert, oder nur als Sonderfall, als der Extremfall des anderen. Interkulturelle Erfahrungen gehörten nicht zur alltäglichen Normalität, sondern waren der schmalen Schicht der Weltbürger, für allem der des Hochadels vorbehalten. Diese kamen, wohin sie immer führen, zu Verwandten und konnten im Fremden heimisch und zu Hause sein. Doch auch die anderen, die Kolonisatoren zumal, begaben sich nicht aus dem abendländischen Kulturkreis heraus und blieben selbst außerhalb der eigenen Kultur im Bereich der verwandten Lebenswelten oder gestalteten diese nach ihrem Muster um. Es gehört zu den tiefen gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen unserer Zeit, daß der Fremde zum Normalfall des anderen geworden ist. Das macht die Frage nach dem Verstehen so dringlich und brisant. Ihre Beantwortung ist kein erkenntnistheoretisches Glasperlenspiel, sondern bittere Notwendigkeit in der Alltagswelt." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 37.

## 2. Classic and Catholic Rome: A Pilgrimage to the "Center"

### *Introduction*

In his seminal biography Eberhard Bethge highlights a major experience during his study period following his time in Tübingen and just before his influential encounter with the choice of Rome was both new and not so new. Although the war and "Jugendbewegung" limited the spirit of exploration, a long standing family tradition and a strong sense of culture quickly re-ignited the desire to travel south.<sup>2</sup> His studies in the humanities at school, absorbing the classics, travelling to Rome exactly what all humanists since the sixteenth century represented a journey to both the birthplace of humanism and Europe's cultural center. We need to recognize, of course, that for him "Europe might have meant Rome; it certainly did not mean New York."<sup>4</sup> For, as Frits de Lange points out, "[Bonhoeffer] more of the German defeat in World War I, brother, or of the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles, which he also was part."<sup>5</sup> Bethge makes it clear that the question to reflect one's own reality vis-à-vis the crisis was not to expect any new theological insights from there.<sup>6</sup>

Reinforcing these clear-cut demarcations was the influential polarisation of *Kultur* versus *Zivilisation* which was characterized by "German thoroughness as opposed to Anglo-Saxon straightforwardness and French frivolity, personal *Bildung* as opposed to mechanical technical science."<sup>7</sup> In fact, the German word *Kultur* represented a controversial term loaded with nationalistic sentiments and feelings of superiority.<sup>8</sup> It was "intimately tied to the notion of spiritual growth and maturation affecting the formation and destiny of a whole nation ..."<sup>9</sup> In other words, "the discourse of *Kultur* helped German intellectuals represent the undeniably powerful French nation as a somewhat unnatural, inauthentic entity predicated on a one-sided development of modernity, and to proclaim in turn their own authentic – but as yet virtual – German nationhood with a heavy emphasis on the organic and the deeply spiritual."<sup>10</sup> And

though the Bonhoeffer family is said to have resisted the "*Geist von 1914*"<sup>11</sup>, even intellectuals (such) as Thomas Mann supported the depiction of the war against France "as a crusade of *Kultur* against *Zivilisation* ..." <sup>12</sup> Growing up in post-1870 Germany, then, the cultural heritage bestowed on Bonhoeffer was shaped by "competitive nationalism and the hangover of 1918 ..." <sup>13</sup>

It is this historical and nationalist-political background which best explains the young Bonhoeffer's membership in the youth movement, his joining of the "Igel", an extreme nationalist student organisation, and finally his enrollment in the paramilitary organization "Schwarze Reichswehr ..." <sup>14</sup> Obviously these involvements, especially the latter one, were temporary, and not without critical reflections, even though for example during his vicariat in Barcelona, as I will show, he could still defend German expansion. But interestingly his experience of the youth movement was an ambivalent one and also included pacifistic intimations aspiring for international peace. <sup>15</sup> Those details partly explain what de Lange identified as "the young Bonhoeffer's ambivalence between universal humanism on the one hand and German nationalism on the other ..." <sup>16</sup> No wonder, then, that in his book *A Patriotism for Today* Keith Clements argues that "Bonhoeffer was as much gripped by the question of what it meant to be *German*, as by what it meant to be *Christian*." <sup>17</sup> It is with those questions in mind that Bonhoeffer embarked on what is considered the continental equivalent to the grand tour. <sup>18</sup>

### *The Classic and Catholic "Other"*

On 4 April 1924 the eighteen year old Dietrich and his older brother Klaus, who had just finished his law examinations, cross the border to Italy. His diary captures the desire and suspense of the moment, and expresses the young student's expectation of an exciting journey from imagination to reality: "Wenn man zum erstenmal die Grenze nach Italien überschreitet, ist es einem eigenartig zumute. Die Phantasie fängt an, sich in Wirklichkeiten zu verwandeln. Wird es wirklich schön sein, alle seine Wünsche erfüllt zu sehen? Oder wird man nicht vielleicht doch sehr ernüchtert nach Hause kommen?" <sup>19</sup> This opening entry of Bonhoeffer's Italian diary echoes the common experience of leaving home, which "always has an element of promise as well as danger, of pleasurable adventure and of risk ..." <sup>20</sup> Such a border crossing

“either solidifies the traveller’s faith in inherited norms and values or puts them to the seductive test of difference...”<sup>21</sup> To Bonhoeffer this experience of difference is from the start, as we have seen, related to the question of distinguishing between one’s fantasies and the actual reality. The first sight of the “Bozener Rosengarten” assured him that “Wirklichkeit ... eben immer noch schöner als die Phantasie [ist]...”<sup>22</sup> But Bonhoeffer’s first glance at Rome, which was, according to Bethge, representative of many first-time visitors, dampens such enthusiasm. There is a sense of disappointment about St. Peter’s. This time reality does not transcend one’s prior imaginations. Such disappointment, though, in contrast to his comments above, was expected: “Der erste Eindruck ist hier nicht der größte, wie immer, wenn man sich etwas jahrelang ausgemalt mit den buntesten Farben der Phantasie und es nachher in Wirklichkeit viel natürlicher sieht.”<sup>23</sup> This sense of a grounding realism is combined with the initial difficulty of gaining “eine einheitliche Anschauung” of the place.<sup>24</sup> The “Wucht und Schönheit” of the Roman Colosseum, on the other hand, makes an overwhelming impression on him and begs an important revision: “Die Antike ist ja gar nicht tot ...”<sup>25</sup>

Understanding “Fremdheit” as “Beziehungsverhältnis”<sup>26</sup>, Schäffter indicates the extent to which one’s personal and social identity determines the degree of “Fremdheit” of the “other”: “Bei der Begegnung zwischen differenten Sinnwelten stoßen ... immer auch unterschiedliche Konzepte und Wahrnehmungstraditionen von dem aufeinander, was als fremdartig gilt.”<sup>27</sup> Bonhoeffer’s family background, his school education and visits to Berlin’s museums familiarized him with classical antiquity, but with apparently little exposure to Catholicism<sup>28</sup>, the unknown and perhaps even the uncanny “other”.<sup>29</sup> Thus it was not surprising that at first the wonders of classical Rome continued to catch both brothers’ attention. Given the family’s longstanding tradition of travelling south, Bonhoeffer’s comment on the Colosseum also reveals what Porter described as “the challenge thrown to the traveler ... to prove his self-worth by means of an experience adequate to the reputation of a hallowed site.”<sup>30</sup> And yet, his comment represents an aesthetic appreciation which looks at the edifices and markers of imperialism without recognizing such “touring as walking among the monuments to the wreckage of Europe’s greatest ambition – to rule the world.”<sup>31</sup>

In the course of this visit Dietrich, in contrast to his brother Klaus, was to be more fascinated by Catholic Rome. Given Bonhoeffer's little exposure to Catholicism this was in fact rather surprising, especially in light of the relationship between Catholics and Protestants at that time which was characterised by "Fremdheit und Scheu..."<sup>32</sup> But, as Schäffter points out, "wenn Grenzen zu Kontaktflächen werden, wird Fremdheit zu bedeutsamer Erfahrung."<sup>33</sup> Hence, in contrast to many of his Protestant predecessors Catholic Rome represented more a "faszinosum" than a "tremendum" to Bonhoeffer. It marked the beginning of a lasting bond to this city.<sup>34</sup> One of his prison letters from Tegel reads: "sie [die Stadt Rom] ist 'das Stück Erde, das ich so sehr liebe.'"<sup>35</sup> Hence, following in the footsteps of his humanist forefathers and expecting to explore the origins of Germany's culture, the journey to Rome started out as a pilgrimage to the "sacred" places of antiquity. But this pilgrimage quickly shifted in focus and became a profound encounter with the reality of the church. While reading "Der Katholizismus" (1923) by Friedrich Heiler<sup>36</sup>, Bonhoeffer seldom missed an opportunity to thoroughly study the masses at St. Peter's or in the Lateran during Easter Week. Writing to his parents he stresses the importance of such first-hand experiences for understanding the Catholic "other". He is struck by the poetic beauty and clarity of the liturgical texts:

Der Katholizismus wird einem so wirklich erst hier ganz klar und ganz besonders, wenn man das Meßbuch genauer studiert. Die Texte sind teils biblisch, teils datiert man sie bis spätestens in[s] 9. Jahrhundert. Durch den oft bei uns so abscheulichen Vortrag dieser Texte durch Priester und Chor denkt man, der Text sei entsprechend. Das ist aber ganz falsch. Die Texte sind zum größten Teil wunderbar poetisch und klar, alle ausgehend von dem Hauptgedanken in der Messe, dem Opfertod und dessen stetiger Wiederholung im Vollzug des Meßopfers in der Kommunion.<sup>37</sup>

It is an encounter with "Fremdheit" which from a sociological point of view describes "das Fremde ... als Verlockung, als Aufbruch aus belastenden Gewohnheiten und Routinen, als Bereicherung und Anregung, als spannend und aufregend, als abenteuerlich und faszinierend."<sup>38</sup> Interestingly Alois Hahn attempts to understand the kind of attraction this experience of "Fremdheit" holds by comparing it to the attraction of festivities in general: "beide bieten eine Abwechslung von Langweile und Alltäglichkeit, beide fesseln sie durch ihren Ausnahmecharakter. Man kann

geradezu sagen, daß das Fest in seiner erlaubten Umkehrung oder Aufhebung des sonst Gebotenen oder Notwendigen ein allerdings zeitlich eingeschränkter Einbruch des Fremden ins Übliche und Normale ist."<sup>39</sup> One could therefore argue that in Bonhoeffer's regular attendance of the Catholic mass, the experience of "Fremdheit" and "Fest" had merged into one. In such a situation the traveler stops remaining a mere observer and becomes a participant of another culture.

Ethnology, in the wake of B. Malinowski, labeled such a participatory approach as "teilnehmende Beobachtung", which others defined in a more derogatory way "Barfußmethode".<sup>40</sup> Participation in this respect signified "mit dem anderen zusammen leben, sich in seine Kultur begeben, sich in seinem sozialen Umfeld aufhalten, seine Sprache sprechen, kurz den Perspektivenwechsel vollziehen und, für eine Zeit jedenfalls, die Welt mit den Augen des betroffenen Volkes wahrzunehmen."<sup>41</sup> It also meant maintaining and refining a dialectic of "Nähe und Distanz" in order to achieve objective results.<sup>42</sup> Social anthropology continued to refine this approach with a two-fold focus: (1) "Selbstinterpretation und Selbstwahrnehmung der betroffenen Menschen" and (2) "der Forscher selbst in seiner Subjekthaftigkeit"<sup>43</sup>. The result of this shift was remarkable in terms of providing greater transparency: "Es wurde nicht nur salonfähig, über teilnehmende Beobachtung als Möglichkeit der Selbsterfahrung und Selbstveränderung zu sprechen, sondern der Umweg über den Fremden wurde bewußt als Weg zu sich selbst konzipiert."<sup>44</sup> But even those who attempted to facilitate an encounter unhampered by pure self-interest had to recognize the interpretative nature of any narrative or description and be aware of the constant danger of reducing complexities and strangeness. This reality led to an understanding of the ethnologist as cultural broker in his role as "Mittler", "Brückenbauer," and "Go-Between".<sup>45</sup>

Bonhoeffer, the young tourist and theological student, was faced with the same challenges as an ethnologist. He found himself mediating between what Bethge referred to as the Protestant "Fremdheit und Scheu" and his own personal experience of Catholic Rome. This mediation involved the task of translation in both its linguistic and ethnological sense. His comments above on the liturgical texts shed light on how both aspects of translation are often interrelated. Not only did his knowledge of Latin allow a careful translation of the texts, but the actual hearing of its particular musical

interpretation and recital also enabled a new appreciation of the subject. The familiar appears in a new light, transcending traditional categories of cultural perception and allowing for a fresh and unexpected encounter. In writing to his parents Bonhoeffer attempts to draw them into those explorations and facilitate a new appreciation for the Catholic “other”. Interestingly the same letter mentions the acquaintance of Platte-Platenius, a priest they met in Bologna who, from an ethnological perspective, fulfilled the role of the cultural mediator. For whoever explores a new culture is seen to be dependent on someone who introduces the stranger to the foreign reality, opens up new vistas, facilitates understanding, but also, if necessary, protects a society from insensitive and disrespectful intruders. Platte-Platenius joined Bonhoeffer on several excursions, helped him understand and follow Easter week’s liturgies and introduced him to the *mysterion* of the Catholic mass.<sup>46</sup> “Barefoot”, so to speak, Bonhoeffer entered sacred spaces, observing and participating with an intensity which was to have important repercussions.

Early on in his diary Bonhoeffer talks about a moment of revelation during his extensive “field work”: “Der Tag war herrlich gewesen, der erste Tag, an dem mir etwas Wirkliches vom Katholizismus aufging, nichts von Romantik usw., sondern ich fange, glaube ich, an, den Begriff ‘Kirche’ zu verstehen.”<sup>47</sup> Bonhoeffer explicitly disassociates this experience from any romanticism and Protestant sentimentality. He claims to have discovered something “real” in terms of his understanding of church. The diary mentions two excursions as being instrumental for this discovery: (1) Palm Sunday morning he attends the mass at St. Peter’s and is struck by the church’s very visible universality: “Am Altar standen außer dem Kardinal noch viele hohe Geistliche, Seminaristen, Mönche. Fabelhaft wirkt die Universalität der Kirche, Weiße, Schwarze, Gelbe, alle in geistlichen Trachten vereint unter der Kirche, scheint doch sehr ideal.”<sup>48</sup> (2) In the evening he visits the church Trinità dei Monti and is deeply moved by the “Vespergesang” of 40 young school girls<sup>49</sup>, “weil so jegliche Spur von Routine fehlte, ja der Ritus nicht mehr nur Ritus war, sondern Gottesdienst in wahren Sinne. Das Ganze machte einen unerhört unberührten Eindruck tiefster Frömmigkeit.”<sup>50</sup> These two accounts suggest that his experience of something “real” in Roman Catholicism should be interpreted as encountering an authentic expression of “church” in both its universal outlook and liturgical practice.



This encounter represents an experience of radical difference which is well captured in Schöffers fourth “Modus der Fremderfahrung”, i.e. “Fremdheit als Komplementarität”. Within this *modus* “werden Schwellenerfahrungen nicht mehr als Verlockung zu einer umfassenden und dadurch letztlich inflationären Ausweitung des Innen aufgefaßt, sondern als Zwang zur radikalen Anerkennung einer *gegenseitigen Differenz*, als Sensibilität für gegenseitige Fremdheit.”<sup>51</sup> It is interpreted as an experience of the boundary “im Sinne einer bedeutungsvollen Einsicht in eine konkrete Grenzlinie eigener Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten.”<sup>52</sup> Implied is both “ein *Offenhalten interner Perspektiven*” and “eine Verweigerung der gesellschaftlich präformierten Antithetik des ‘Entweder-Oder’.”<sup>53</sup> It includes the experience of beginning to understand what one does not understand. For “Fremdheit macht den ‘blinden Fleck’ der eigenen Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit erkennbar und wird so zur mühevollen Erfahrung einer gegenseitigen Grenze.”<sup>54</sup>

In Bonhoeffer’s case this radical experience of difference helped him to critically perceive his own denomination as “provinziell, nationalistisch und kleinbürgerlich befangen.”<sup>55</sup> The contrast to Bonhoeffer’s previous experience of “church” is further deepened by his hesitation to use the word “church” when referring to his own denomination and instead preferring the word Protestantism.<sup>56</sup> In the light of such reserve, Catholic devotion to the “church” and its universal expression offered a very new experience.<sup>57</sup> Clements explains how to “Lutheran Bonhoeffer, ‘church’ had hitherto simply been part of the German Protestant scene, the place where one might go from time to time to hear the Sunday sermon, or on major festivals; but hardly of the essence of Christianity, which was mainly a matter of individual faith and morality.”<sup>58</sup> In a similar vein the Catholic practice of confession conveyed to him a church which is alive and authentic in its liturgy. Visiting the church Maria Maggiore on its day of confession Bonhoeffer notes how “alle Beichtstühle besetzt und von Betenden umdrängt [sind]. Man sieht hier so erfreulich viel ernste Gesichter, bei denen alles, was man gegen den Katholizismus sagt, nicht zutrifft. Auch Kinder beichten mit wirklicher Inbrunst, das ist sehr ergreifend zu sehen. Die Beichte ist für viele von diesen Leuten kein ‘Muß’ mehr, sondern Bedürfnis geworden.”<sup>59</sup> These first-hand experiences open up a fresh perspective on confession and invite a more critical re-reading of traditional interpretations: “Die Beichte muß nicht zur ‘Skrupulosität’ führen, so oft das vorkommen mag und gerade bei den Ernstesten

immer wieder wird. Sie ist auch nicht nur Pädagogium, sondern für primitive Menschen die einzige Möglichkeit, mit Gott sprechen zu können, für religiöse Weiterblickende die Vergegenständlichung der Idee der Kirche, die sich in Beichte und Absolution vollzieht."<sup>60</sup>

That the impact of Catholic Rome was powerful and lasting can be seen in the way Bonhoeffer was to include the Catholic "other" in some of his talks following his visit to Rome. It was an overwhelming encounter especially in view of the church's visible universality. In one of his sermons from Barcelona the church is envisioned as the wandering people of God. It is a people mysteriously bound together across national borders, invisible, but still real in its solidarity and mutual support for all its members.<sup>61</sup> In the same sermon he employs a range of vivid metaphors to describe the kind of devotion he experienced in Rome and thereby reveals the extent to which he was able to identify with the emotional intensity displayed:

Es gibt ein Wort, das bei den Katholiken, der es hört, alle Gefühle der Liebe und der Seligkeit entzündet; das ihm alle Tiefen des religiösen Empfindens vom Schauer und Schrecken des Gerichtes bis zur Süßigkeit der Gottesnähe aufwühlt; das ihm aber ganz gewiß Heimatgefühle wachruft; Gefühle, die nur ein Kind der Mutter gegenüber in Dankbarkeit, Ehrfurcht und hingebener Liebe empfindet; Gefühle, wie sie einen überkommen, wenn man nach langer Zeit einmal wieder sein Elternhaus, seine Kinderheimat betritt.<sup>62</sup>

Catholic Rome is pictured as nurturing mother, the home that welcomes you after a period of absence, stirring up emotions of thankfulness, warmth and love. And again it is contrasted with his native *Kulturprotestantismus*: "Und es gibt ein Wort, das für den Evangelischen den Klang von etwas unendlich Banalem hat, etwas mehr oder weniger Gleichgültigem und Überflüssigem; das einem das Herz nicht höher schlagen läßt; mit dem sich so oft Gefühle der Langweile verbinden; das zum Mindesten unserem religiösen Gefühl keine Flügel verleiht ..."<sup>63</sup> This encounter created an experience of alienation which in Schaffter's words includes "die beklemmende Erfahrung, daß auch Eigenes und Vertrautes zu Fremdartigem unschlagen kann."<sup>64</sup> It includes the questioning of distinctions between inside and outside: "Die Grenze zwischen Innen und Außen verschwimmt, wenn das 'Heimische' unheimlich wird."<sup>65</sup>

The result is what Sundermeier describes as “doppelte Fremderfahrung”<sup>66</sup>: “Die Rückkehr in die Heimat macht den Rückkehrer dort zunächst zum Fremden.”<sup>67</sup> It is something which inscribed itself into Bonhoeffer’s life as an influential pattern.

But the alienness of the Catholic “other” also becomes here what Schöffter refers to as his third *modus*: “Fremdheit als Ergänzung”. It enables “*Selbsterfahrung im Sinne eines Aufdeckens von Lücken, Fehlstellen oder, wenn man will, auch ‘Fehlern’*.”<sup>68</sup> The urgency and importance Bonhoeffer attributed to such a learning process in an almost prophetic manner is substantiated by Schöffter’s emphasis of the need to discover and appropriate “relevante Fremdheit” not only for individuals but also for social groups, societal institutions and cultures.<sup>69</sup> But Schöffter also highlights the ambivalence inherent to such a process of accommodation. He distinguishes between two concurring forces which are able to explain Bonhoeffer’s movement between deep affection and critical distance: “Die zentrifugal nach außen drängenden ‘Assimilationsgelüste’ finden ihren Gegenpol in der zentripetalen Bewegung einer Sicherung der internen Verarbeitungsmöglichkeiten.”<sup>70</sup> Such accommodation remains non-threatening wherever “Entdeckung von Fremdheit als Wiedergewinnung abgespaltener Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten und als Entfaltung latenter Potenzen der Eigenheit gedeutet werden kann.”<sup>71</sup> But wherever it is experienced as weakening the internal capacity to process new data and hence leading to some kind of self-alienation, the response tends to turn into defensive demarcation which forms part of what Schöffter describes as “Fremdheit als Gegenbild”.<sup>72</sup> Within such an encounter “other” can appear as “eine totale Dimension überwältigend bedrohlicher Übermacht.”<sup>73</sup> Such “tremendum” is painfully felt by Bonhoeffer in the way Protestantism is being side-lined by the sheer size of Catholic festivities: “Der Katholizismus kann noch lange weiter ohne Protestantismus, das Volk hängt noch sehr fest [an ihm,] und oft kommt einem gegen die hiesigen Feierlichkeiten in diesem gewaltigen Umfange die protestantische Kirche wie eine kleine Sekte vor.”<sup>74</sup>

In our particular case woven into the experience of “Fremdheit als Ergänzung” is the encounter with Catholic Rome as representing the “Resonanzboden des Eigenen”<sup>75</sup>, Schöffter’s first *modus*: “In dieser Deutung erhält das Fremde ... die Funktion des Ursprünglichen, des ‘Urgrundes’ oder eines allgemeinen Bedingungszusammenhangs.”<sup>76</sup> It becomes apparent the way Bonhoeffer perceives

Protestantism's struggle for survival as being dependent on the recovery of the church's original meaning: "und doch ist unser Schicksal besiegelt, wenn wir nicht diesem Wort einen neuen, oder vielleicht den uralten Sinn wieder abzugewinnen vermögen. Weh uns, wenn uns das Wort nicht bald wieder wichtig, ja Anliegen unséres Lebens wird."<sup>77</sup> The historical development Schöffter sketches regarding this category of "Fremdheit" highlights "ein Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Abhängigkeit und emanzipatorischer Bewegung", which helps us understand Bonhoeffer's ambivalent reaction and the difficulty of negotiating his Protestant identity:

Das 'Eigene' ging erst durch ein Heraustreten, durch eine Trennung oder einen 'Abfall' aus der ursprünglichen, undifferenzierten Ganzheit hervor, die nun als Außenseite und Hintergrund verfremdet wird und hierdurch der eigenen Identität die Konstrastfläche bietet. In temporaler Deutung erscheint hier das Fremde als das Ursprüngliche, ohne das die Eigenart nicht möglich wäre, zu der sie jedoch im Verlauf einer Identitätsentwicklung in Distanz treten muß.<sup>78</sup>

His confession to an acquaintance in Barcelona that Catholic Rome had been a real temptation to him illustrates this very struggle between "Abhängigkeit und emanzipatorischer Bewegung ..."<sup>79</sup>, a struggle depicting the interrelationship between "Fremdheit als Ergänzung" and "Fremdheit als Gegenbild", Schöffter's second *modus*. The former *modus* welcomes the stranger as enrichment to be appropriated and incorporated, while the latter *modus* suggests strong opposition as a way of strengthening identity. The latter is an experience of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild", in which "das Fremde ... den Charakter einer Negation der Eigenheit [erhält], und zwar im Sinn von gegenseitiger Unvereinbarkeit."<sup>80</sup> This negation represents a shift of attention "von Faszination und Bedrohtheitsgefühl auf eine feste und klar definierte Grenzlinie, mit der die Integrität der Eigenheit bewahrt und geschützt werden soll."<sup>81</sup> The result is that "das Fremde zum Ausgegrenzten [gerät], das dem Eigenen 'wesensmäßig' nicht zugehörig ist und als Fremdkörper die Integrität der eigenen Ordnung zu stören und in Frage zu stellen droht."<sup>82</sup> At the same time such negation is seen to fulfill the important function of a contrast, "der als Gegenbild gerade die Identität des Eigenen verstärken kann."<sup>83</sup>

The "other" as negative contrast features especially in Bonhoeffer's disappointing and critical intimations in connection with his papal audience<sup>84</sup> and his disputes with his mentor from Bologna. His diary tells about discussions which according to Bethge triggered "das Arsenal seiner protestantischen Ausrüstung":

Lange beiderseitig lebhaft geführte Unterhaltung, er versuchte Kant zu bekämpfen, geriet aber dabei wider Willen in die üblichen katholischen circuli vitiosi, glaubt außerdem an den Gottesbeweis aus der Zweckmäßigkeit der Welt als Erkenntnis und verwirrte dabei natürlich immer logische und Glaubens,erkenntnis', daher die Zirkelschlüsse. Er möchte mich gern bekehren und ist in seiner Art sehr ehrlich überzeugt. So bringt er es am wenigsten zustande! Durch dialektische Kunstgriffe, die er allerdings nicht als solche gebraucht. Durch diese Unterhaltung bin ich mit meiner Sympathie doch wieder weit zurückgegangen. Die katholische Dogmatik verhängt alles Ideale am Katholizismus, ohne es zu wissen. Beichte und Beichtdogmatik ist ein gewaltiger Unterschied. 'Kirche' und 'Kirche' in der Dogmatik leider ebenso!<sup>85</sup>

Given Bonhoeffer's tempting experiences of Catholicism, his strong critique of Catholic dogmatics conveys an attempt to once again draw clear demarcation lines and re-establish his own Protestant integrity and identity. With a sense of disappointment (or relief?) Catholic dogmatics is seen to undermine his positive experiences of Catholic church life. Also his mentor's attempt to convert him to Catholicism is said to have achieved the rather opposite effect. And finally Bonhoeffer's visit to the Lateran on Saturday morning before Easter Sunday generated the daring attempt of developing two opposing types of human beings on the basis of their respective liturgical perspectives. This comparison represents a dualistic approach which conveys a rhetorical strategy Arjun Appadurai described as "metonymic freezing", "a process of representational essentializing ... in which one part or aspect of people's lives come to epitomize them as a whole, constituting their theoretical niche in an anthropological taxonomy."<sup>86</sup> There is little doubt about who is to be credited with greater spiritual depth:

Es herrschte eine erfreulich lebhaft, freudige Stimmung unter dem Klerus, Vorfreude auf's große "Gloria" in der Messe, d.h. auf die Auferstehungsbotschaft. Diese Vorwegnahme der Stimmungen mutet uns ja eigenartig an, die wir Ostersonntag doch noch unter dem Eindruck des Karfreitags begehen. So scheiden sich zwei

Menschentypen ganz klar, ein Typus, der schon unter dem Eindruck des Kommenden steht und darüber die Sachlichkeit für den Augenblick verliert, die der zweite Typus in besonderem Maße hat. Das eine sind die Propheten, Schwärmer, die Erwarter, die ändern die Sachlichen, oft Tieferen, bis auf den Rest Auskostenden, die einen die mehr Spekulativen, die ändern die mehr Grüblerischen.<sup>87</sup>

In contrast to our more critical reading of Bonhoeffer's travel writings, Bethge's portrayal of Bonhoeffer's trip to Rome introduces us to an open-minded traveller who in his search of the "other" managed to move beyond iconoclasm and dogmatic prejudice. Both his erudition and his desire to expand his horizon are said to have looked for "das Andere und dessen relatives Recht ..."<sup>88</sup> For he did not travel, "um Bestätigungen einzusammeln, daß seine Konfession unter allen Umständen eben doch recht habe ..."<sup>89</sup> It is in this sense that Bethge sums up Bonhoeffer's attitude as "kritische Liebe und liebende Kritik"<sup>90</sup> My analysis tried to show how this attitude was played out at various interconnected levels of experiencing "Fremdheit". The question arising is: What is after all the concrete object of what Bethge describes as Bonhoeffer's critical affection and affectionate critique? Bethge notices how "Bonhoeffers Aufmerksamkeit bald ganz von dem Phänomen der 'Kirche' gefesselt [ist]. Auf dieses doppeldeutige, aber konkrete Gebilde bezog er zunächst die theologischen Grundlinien, wie wir noch sehen werden."<sup>91</sup> And it is in this sense that Rome is seen to have helped Bonhoeffer not only to articulate the theme of the "church" but also to begin to explore the "Motiv der Konkretion, d.h. sich nicht in metaphysische Spekulation zu verlieren ..."<sup>92</sup> However Bonhoeffer's remarks on his return from their excursion to North Africa, seem to demand a more nuanced interpretation of his new interest in the "church" in relation to its concrete expression:

Ich konnte nicht sagen, war es dieses oder jenes, was mich so unwiderstehlich zurückzog; und wenn ich auch gesagt hätte: St. Peter, so war es nicht die Kirche, nein, es war ganz Rom, was ich in St. Peter eben am klarsten zusammenfassen läßt. Es war das Rom der Antike, des Mittelalters und ebenso der heutigen Tage, ganz einfach der Angelpunkt europäischer Kultur und europäischen Lebens. Mir schlug tatsächlich das Herz vernehmlich, als ich zum zweitenmal die alten Wasserleitungen uns begleiten sah bis an die Mauern der Stadt heran.<sup>93</sup>

It was, then, not so much St. Peter's as "church" as its capacity to encapsulate the whole of Rome of every period as the cardinal point of European culture and life which made it so attractive to Bonhoeffer. In that sense St. Peter's is seen to bring together and represent both classic and Catholic Rome as Europe's cultural "Angelpunkt". Inscribed into St. Peter's is the passage of time, the coming and going of different cultures, the incorporation of cultural diversity. In this sense Bonhoeffer's trip to Rome represents, in Porter's words, "a paradigm of travel undertaken to the center of a self-confident cultural tradition for the purposes of self-cultivation and the reaffirmation of a common civilized heritage."<sup>94</sup> It corresponds with his experience of growing up "in a family that derived its real education, not from school, but from a deeply-rooted sense of being guardians of a great historical heritage and intellectual tradition."<sup>95</sup> St. Peter's, then, to Bonhoeffer offered an important link between his deep appreciation of this heritage and tradition and his new experience of a church which is alive and universal in its outlook. It became a symbol of integration by uniting humanism and Christianity, which to Clifford Green "were [both] embodied in his [Bonhoeffer's] family, and not without considerable personal struggle."<sup>96</sup> It suggests a different synthesis from Berlin's *Kulturprotestantismus* as well as from Barth's radical rejection of the same. It is not surprising, then, that according to his student friend Wilhelm Dreier, "Bonhoeffer nach Rom 'oft den Wert des Katholizismus verteidigte und vor geistiger Arroganz warnte'."<sup>97</sup>

In the end Bonhoeffer did not find as much time for the systematic study of Catholic theology as he originally planned. It was only after his detour to Sicily and North Africa that he managed for a short time to regularly attend some theological seminars.<sup>98</sup> Pondering the date of his return to Berlin Bonhoeffer acknowledges the need to have more time to process what he has seen and experienced:

so verlockend es natürlich wäre, noch hier zu bleiben, so glaube ich doch, daß, wenn ich es noch täte, ich schließlich auch hier immer mehr ins Zimmer gedrängt würde; denn man möchte die unendliche Fülle von Anregungen nun etwas einordnen und dem einzelnen mehr nachgehen, oft ganz spezielle Gebiete arbeiten, was vielleicht doch jetzt in dem Maße noch nicht so viel Sinn haben würde, wo mir auch noch viel Allgemeineres fehlt. Ich würde gern in Berlin Vorlesungen hören, die in näherer Berührung mit diesen Gebieten stehen und glaube, daß das für mich endgültig

vielleicht doch mehr Sinn hat; so viel schöner es natürlich ist, die Anschauung immer daneben zu haben, wie es hier eben ist.<sup>99</sup>

Bonhoeffer was to further unfold his particular appreciation of Catholic Rome on one of the regular discussion evenings he organized for a group of Grunewald schoolboys. Once again St. Peter's as Europe's cultural "Angelpunkt" comes into focus: "Die Verdienste, die sich die katholische Kirche im Laufe ihrer Geschichte um europäische Kultur, um die ganze Welt erwarb, sind kaum zu überschätzen. Sie hat barbarische Völker christianisiert und zivilisiert, und ist lange Zeit einzige Hüterin von Wissenschaft und Kunst gewesen. Ihre Klöster stehen hier voran. Sie hat eine geistige Macht ohnegleichen entfaltet ..."<sup>100</sup> Bonhoeffer's appraisal mirrors the prevailing view of Rome as the capital of the classical world and of the Western image of empire. It illustrates some of the main features of colonial discourse. The cultural "other" is classified as "barbaric" and not perceived in its subjectivity. Instead it is reduced to an object to be christianized and civilized. Tzvetan Todorov's insightful study *Die Eroberung Amerikas. Das Problem des Anderen* illustrates the various configurations such a "mission" could comprise.<sup>101</sup> In the end, of course, it always narrowed down to a strategy of assimilation or subjugation.<sup>102</sup> Sundermeier maintains that throughout the whole period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century this basic strategy did not change.<sup>103</sup> It was only with Malinowski's "teilnehmender Beobachtung" mentioned above that a change of perspective emerged. But also Bonhoeffer's perception of the Catholic church as the sole guardian of European science and art belongs to a by now outdated historiographical tradition. In his critique of Bonhoeffer's concept of Europe Frits de Lange offers an important corrective to such a one-sided perspective. For "Europe, according to the analysis of modern cultural historians, is neither in origin nor in character exclusively Christian. 'One could say that, in an early phase, Islam *shaped* Europe by hemming in Christendom (seventh century) and that, in a second phase, Europe shaped *itself* in relation to Islam by driving it back at Poitiers ...'"<sup>104</sup> And therefore "Not Christianity, but Islam made Europe what it is. Only the medieval Europa that came into being afterwards could possibly be identified with Christendom."<sup>105</sup>

Bonhoeffer then continues in the same passage to describe the Catholic church as a world in itself, governed by a combination of tolerance and intolerance: "noch heute



bewundern wir an ihr, wie sie den Grundsatz der Katholizität und der alleinseligmachenden Kirche, Toleranz und Intoleranz verbindet. Sie ist eine Welt für sich. Unendlich Verschiedenartiges ist in ihr zusammengeströmt und dies bunte Bild gibt ihr den unwiderstehlichen Reiz (*complexio oppositorum*).”<sup>106</sup> At the same time the rich cultural diversity of the church is seen to be framed by a strong sense of unity: “Es hat selten ein Land soviel verschiedenartige Menschen hervorgebracht wie die katholischen Kirche. Mit bewundernswerter Kraft versteht sie ihre Einheit in all der Mannigfaltigkeit zu erhalten; versteht sie, die Liebe und die Ehrfurcht der Massen sich zu erwerben und starken Gemeinschaftssinn zu wecken.”<sup>107</sup> It should strike us that Bonhoeffer perceives the Catholic church as a country in itself which comes closest to meeting the need for both unity and difference. From a post-colonial perspective one would, of course, have to critically look at the uneven power relations underlying such aspirations for universality and unity. In this respect Bonhoeffer’s idealization of such unity reflects an expression of “an old German *Sehnsucht*” in the midst of a torn Europe.<sup>108</sup> Considering the power dynamics characterizing St. Peter’s as yet another contact zone we have to critically ask: Who determines the rules of such universal unity where “Weiße, Schwarze, Gelbe, alles in geistlichen Trachten vereint unter der Kirche”<sup>109</sup> come together? What are the cultural politics behind such displays of harmony and union? How “real”, then, is Bonhoeffer’s discovery of “etwas Wirkliches vom Katholizismus”?<sup>110</sup> Or asked the other way around: To what extent is the Catholic “other” merely everything Bonhoeffer would like his own Protestantism to be?

### *Conclusion*

Our analysis of Bonhoeffer’s exploration of Rome revealed a complex negotiation of identity. It involved Schäffter’s four different “*Modi der Fremderfahrung*”. But according to Schäffter the first three *modi* of encounter, “Fremdheit als Resonanzboden”, “Fremdheit als Gegenbild”, and “Fremdheit als Ergänzung” all fall short of a genuine encounter with the reality of the “other”: “Das Fremde wird nicht stehen gelassen in seiner Besonderheit, die Auseinandersetzung damit geschieht nicht partnerhaft-dialogisch, sondern alle Andersheit wird auf dem kürzestmöglichen Wege als Eben-doch-Eigenes vereinnahmt.”<sup>111</sup> The explanation given for such subsumation is the fact “daß Fremdheit für die jeweils zugrundeliegende Ordnungsstruktur eine

wichtige Funktion bei der Konstitutierung von Identität erhält.”<sup>112</sup> And therefore “die Fixierung auf einen internen Standpunkt” remained its common characteristic.<sup>113</sup> And yet as we saw in at least one particular moment of the travel narrative, the all powerful and all subsuming Cartesian “I” experienced a decisive moment of interruption which created an unexpected opening for a new perspective and an acknowledgement of radical difference in terms of Schöffter’s fourth *modus*. We referred to it as the moment where, in Hahn’s words, Bonhoeffer experienced the “Einbruch des Fremden” while attending Catholic mass. This experience was marked by Bonhoeffer’s willingness to be “barefoot”, to no longer remain a mere observer but become an active participant of the liturgical movement. It was a process mediated by Platte-Platenius and accompanied by intense aesthetic appreciation. The result was, as we have seen, the experience of something “real” about the phenomena “church” and closely connected to the beauty of finding cultural difference within the unity of worship. It was more than, as Bonhoeffer himself noted self-critically, a romantic imagination. And no matter how idealized his perception might have been, there was enough authenticity to unmask his own Lutheran heritage as provincial and nationalistic. Important to our own study is the way this experience of something real coincides with Schöffter’s notion of “Grenzerfahrung”. It suggests that what Bonhoeffer referred to as his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” has to be located at the point where a particular “Fremderfahrung” becomes a concrete “Grenzerfahrung”. It represents an experience of boundary which Bonhoeffer is to further reflect both philosophically and theologically in his attempt to unfold the concept of the church in his dissertation *Sanctorum Communio*. As we will show in the final chapter, these theoretical reflections offer an important commentary on the importance of such an experience of the “other” as boundary in order to make the “complexio oppositorum” more “real”.

And yet apart from this actual boundary experience Bonhoeffer’s reflections on the interpretation of art reveal a sensitivity to hermeneutical questions of interpreting and representing one’s “Fremderfahrung”. His travel journal projects a young man, who is an enthusiastic connoisseur of art and of beauty in all its forms. His receptive openness to Rome’s art world led to a surprising revelation. After his visit to the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Antica and seeing works by Andrea del Sarto, Reni, and Tizian Bonhoeffer remarks on how much the context determines one’s aesthetic

perception: "Die Niederländer kann man in solcher Umgebung nicht begreifen. Während mir in Berlin doch der rechte Sinn für italienische Malerei, wie ich erst jetzt merke, gefehlt hat, so fehlt er mir hier für die in Berlin von mir am meisten geliebten Niederländer."<sup>114</sup> In fact, the actual experience of the place of origin with its particular atmosphere, flora and other surroundings is seen to be crucial for being able to understand a work of art. Listening to a performance of the "Frühlingssonate" the same insight transpires: "Am Nachmittag bei Joccas; die Frühlingssonate gespielt: ein merkwürdiger Eindruck, auf italienischem Boden ein so charakteristisch nicht italienisches Stück zu hören, gespielt mit italienischem Pathos und Leichtlebigkeit."<sup>115</sup> And it is at the first sight of the Laokoon in the Belvedere that Bonhoeffer talks about the "other" as "tremendum": "Als ich da zum erstenmal den Laokoon sah, durchfuhr mich tatsächlich ein Schrecken, denn er ist unglaublich."<sup>116</sup> Bethge highlights the lasting impression this "classical man of sorrow" made on him: "Bei jedem neuen Romaufenthalt galt sein Besuch dem Laokoon. Noch aus der Tegeler Zelle hat er nach diesem "Schmerzensmann der Antike" gefragt."<sup>117</sup> He also systematically inspected the early Christian mosaics and catacombs and acknowledged their tremendous value for understanding dogmatics and ecclesiastical history.<sup>118</sup> His visit to the "Galleria Borghese" becomes an occasion for contemplating the dilemma of both the difficulty and the need to interpret: "Das Deuten ist überhaupt eins der schwierigsten Probleme, und doch ist unser ganzes Denken darauf eingestellt; wir müssen deuten, Sinn geben, damit wir leben und denken können."<sup>119</sup> He therefore concludes that "wenn man nicht deuten muß, dann lasse man es doch ..."<sup>120</sup> For when it comes to art, for example, interpretation is not deemed necessary where intuition is strong:

Ein Kunstwerk mit klaren Sinnen und Verstand aufgenommen tut im Unterbewußtsein das Seine, und das Verstehen des Kunstwerkes wird kein Deuten mehr nötig haben, sondern man sieht entweder intuitiv das Richtige oder nicht. Das nenne ich Kunstverständnis, daß man nach gründlicher Arbeit bei der Aufnahme das unbedint sichere Gefühl hat: hier habe ich den Kern gefaßt, auf Grund irgendwelcher unbewußter Vorgänge; die intuitive Sicherheit entsteht.<sup>121</sup>

To then try to express one's intuitive understanding by way of an interpretation is seen to be "sinnlos für andere, da es den einen nicht hilft, die andern es nicht brauchen, und bringt der Sache selbst keinen Vorteil."<sup>122</sup> But Bonhoeffer

acknowledges that the subject matter is far from solved for one is dealing here with “schwer meßbare[n] Größen und Werte[n].”<sup>123</sup> It strikes us that intuition is equated with the sphere of pre-reflective consciousness. For to some degree it anticipates Bonhoeffer’s distinction between the *actus directus* and *actus reflexus* in *Akt und Sein*. Re-visiting Bonhoeffer’s experience of something real in the light of his own hermeneutical reflections one notices how Bonhoeffer himself refrained from explaining what this “real” is about apart from pointing out the phenomenon of the “church” as point of reference. It suggests a reading of his “Grenzerfahrung” as *actus directus*. For it was only by inference that we were able to interpret his remark. And yet, as we tried to show, this *actus directus* was followed by an *actus reflexus* in terms of integrating and appropriating the “Fremderfahrung”. It meant to interpret the Catholic “other” as “Resonanzboden”, “Gegenbild”, and “Ergänzung”. At the same time his ongoing engagement with Catholicism showed that the initial experience of the *actus directus* continued to voice itself as persistent “surplus” resisting complete appropriation. It represented a response which transcended theological reasoning and was deeply rooted in an experience of aesthetic beauty:

Nachmittags wieder St. Peter: das große Te deum. Ich hatte es immer gehofft, in St. Peter noch einmal etwas Schönes zu erleben. Aber so habe ich es mir nicht erträumt, der Chor sang engelhaft, überirdisch schön und als Gegenstrophe die ganze Gemeinde von St. Peter. Es war ein ungeheurer Eindruck. Noch einmal zum Schluß sah ich, was Katholizismus ist, und gewann ihn wieder herzlich lieb.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 1967, 8 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 93.

<sup>2</sup> Bethge notes: “Rom war die Stadt der von Hases. Das Beispiel des Urgroßvaters wirkte nach: seine zwanzig Romreisen, seine Freundschaft mit den Nazarenern auf dem Pincio, mit Gregorovius, Hildebrand und Thorwaldsen. Auch der Großvater hatte kaum ein anderes Reiseziel als Italien in Betracht gezogen. Im Klassenzimmer des Grunewaldgymnasiums hatten die Abbildungen vom Forum Romanum an den Wänden gehangen. Der Studienrat Dr. Kranz war ein imponierender Italienkenner, Dr. Czeppan das wandelnde Lexikon für das antike Rom. Rom überragte in den Augen der vorangegangenen Generation alle anderen Bildungszentren.” Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 84.

<sup>3</sup> Frits De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," in *Bonhoeffer's Ethics. Old Europe and New Frontiers*, ed. Guy Carter, René: van Hoogstraten van Eyden, Hans-Dirk and Wiersma Jurjen (Kampen: Kokk Pharos Publishing House, 1991), 82. Note also Porter's observations on the mindset beginning early in the 18th century: "At the same time, it was widely assumed throughout Europe that travel within the boundaries of the Continent was indispensable to the education of an enlightened man of the world. In part as a consequence of the classical literary tradition in which they were educated and, in part, out of a sense that modern European society since the Renaissance had developed an advanced form of civilized life that needed to be observed at first hand, the grand tour or its equivalent in continental countries was taken to be the proper culmination of the education of a young gentleman." Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton; New Jersey: Princeton university press, 1991), 26-27.

<sup>4</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 82.

<sup>5</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 82. Bethge argues in a similar vein: "Der gutbürgerliche Deutsche verschloß sich noch eine Weile diesem Westen, in dem er all das verkörpert sah, was der Versailler Vertrag in Deutschland an Elend verursacht hatte." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 84.

<sup>6</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 93.

<sup>7</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 82. Masuzawa hereby observes: "In a development similar to that of the English word ... German *Kultur* acquired an expanded meaning, in the sense of something like 'a wholeway of life.' But in the course of this development two different terms, *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*, emerged, with the result that the would-be synonyms became invested with an unexpected significance: 'By the time of Napoleon at any rate, culture was German and civilization was French ...'" Tomoko Masuzawa, "Culture," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 88. He continues to explain: "This opposition between culture and civilization, of course, was not value neutral. The evaluative intentions of the dichotomy are plainly expressed, for instance, in a dictionary entry from the 1920s written by Oswald Spengler, author of the once famous *Decline of the West*. According to this source, *Kultur* was to be distinguished from civilization because the former referred to 'the ennoblement [*Veredelung*] of man through the development of his ethical, artistic, and intellectual powers.' 'Civilization,' Spengler concluded, 'is to culture as the external is to the internal, the artificially constructed to the naturally developed, the mechanical to the organic, 'means' to 'ends' ...'" Masuzawa, "Culture," 76.

<sup>8</sup> It represents an "idea of culture that is inherently hierarchical and evaluative, that is, the notion of culture as the sum total of superior, morally and spiritually edifying human accomplishments (often labeled 'high culture'), as well as the relation between this idea and the problem of national identity." Masuzawa, "Culture," 71-72.

<sup>9</sup> Masuzawa, "Culture," 75. "As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century in this region of Europe, a highly educated minority or, in terms made famous by Fritz Ringer, 'German mandarins,' was already present. This powerful 'aristocracy of learning' in its broad sense included the governing bureaucrats of various principalities and newly prominent and increasingly well-paid university professors, as well as their lesser colleagues in the educational profession. According to Ringer (1969), the twin concepts of culture (*Kultur*) and spiritual formation (*Bildung*) became current as key terms expressing the mandarins' ideal of learning as an antithesis to instrumental, institutional training. Thus these concepts were also inseparable from the notion of education (*Erziehung*), though not in the narrow 'mechanical' sense of instruction (*Unterricht*) but in the sense of religious and neo-humanist conceptions of 'inner growth' and integral self-development ..." Masuzawa, "Culture," 87.

<sup>10</sup> Masuzawa, "Culture," 77. In recalling the political reality of modern Europe by the nineteenth century Masuzawa explains how "France had long been a leading political power and a model of the modern nation-state, alternately emulated and feared by the rest of Europe. Germany, by contrast, was hardly a nation but a mere aggregate of relatively minor principalities long subsumed under the medieval rubric of the Holy Roman Empire, with one nothern district, Prussia, in ascending preeminence. In the absence of material statehood, then, German *Kultur* was conjured up as an imaginary nation or, even better, as a spiritual (*geistige*) manifestation of a virtual totality not so much organized by a sociopolitical reality as enlivened by a natural, organic folk spirit (*Volksgeist*). In comparison to such a sublime idea of a nation, any actually existing nation-state could be construed as merely a materially constructed, artificially contracted, mechanically maintained body politic, quite possibly lacking in any spiritual authenticity. In light of this logic, the French Republic, on the one

hand, would be seen as a nation in its external form only, with its internationally conceived mission of civilization reflecting only the superficial aspect of reason and of modern scientific spirit, and its ultimate objective nothing more than a facile egalitarian universalism that would defy the distinct character of the *Volk*. On the other hand, mother nature itself would appear to authenticate and justify the German nation insofar as it was perceived as the embodiment of a distinct *Kultur*." Masuzawa, "Culture," 76-77.

<sup>11</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 83.

<sup>12</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 83.

<sup>13</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 82. He explains the historical development as follows: "The *gebildete* class was also mobilized, in its own way, when Germany attempted to overtake the rest of Europe after its late unification under Prussian hegemony. The frustration of having missed out on the economic revolution led, after 1870, to an outburst of revolutionary capitalism and imperialism with the rest of Europe as rival – a competition which resulted in World War I." De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 82.

<sup>14</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 55f and 74f.

<sup>15</sup> Bethge refers to Bonhoeffer's appreciative comments on the youth movement in his church lecture series on ethics in Barcelona 1929: "Man will gegen ein innerlich unwahr gewordenen Kulturganzes Sturm laufen, die Fesseln der Wahrheit lösen, so hört man es überall. Und damit ist der zutiefst ethische Charakter der Bewegung, wenn anders man nicht vollständig skeptisch bleiben will, doch gewährleistet..." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 56-57. Bethge also notes how 1930/31 Bonhoeffer explicitly expressed solidarity "mit einer bündischen Gruppe in Deutschland, die sich dem internationalen Frieden verschrieben hatte – zu einer Zeit, als bereits nationalistische Parolen und der 'Marschschritt der Kolonnen' alles zu übertönen begannen. Dort in Amerika redete er geradezu wie ein Repräsentant solcher pazifistischen Gemeinschaft." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 56-57.

<sup>16</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 83.

<sup>17</sup> Keith W. Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1984), XII.

<sup>18</sup> Porter explains how "in the eighteenth century the grand tour was an ideological cultural practice that was calculated to give a North European *fils de famille* a sociopolitical as well as a worldly and aesthetic education. And the place of Rome as originary source and center of a continuous European civilizing tradition was crucial. In the discourse of our time, Rome was the mystified ground of a European phallogocentric order and of its hegemonic power. The model of the Roman imperial system, its normative Latin language and literature as well as its legal code, found a concrete embodiment for the tourist in such monumental civil-engineering projects and artworks as Roman roads and aqueducts, radial city planning, coliseums, triumphal arches, and equestrian statues. And insofar as the Italian Renaissance adapted classical models, it produced an urban architecture of equal authority which culminated in the grandiose edifices for princes of the Baroque church." Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 142.

<sup>19</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Pfeifer, vol. 9 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1986), 81-82.

<sup>20</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 28.

<sup>21</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 82.

<sup>23</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 82.

<sup>24</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 82-83.

<sup>25</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 83.

<sup>26</sup> Ortfried Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schäffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 12.

<sup>28</sup> Bethge though mentions two particular incidences of encounter with the Catholic "other": "so kam es ihm [Bonhoeffer] erst als Obersekundaner in den Sinn, auf einer Harzwanderung in Nordhausen eine katholische Kirche zu betreten; fast erschrocken schrieb er von ihrer Pracht an die Eltern. Und erst im Tübinger Sommersemester fand er Gelegenheit, etwas von katholischem Brauchtum kennenzulernen.

Bereitwillig meinte er, bei der Rottenburger Fronleichnamsprozession überwiegend genuine Züge beobachtet zu haben." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 85.

<sup>29</sup> Schäffter suggests by way of example the following distinctions: "Das Fremde als das Auswärtige", "Das Fremde als Fremdartiges", "Das Fremde als das noch Unbekannte", "Das Fremde als das letztlich Unerkennbare", and "Das Fremde als das Unheimliche". Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 14.

<sup>30</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Post-Contemporary Interventions, ed. Stanley Fish and Frederic Jameson (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), 63.

<sup>32</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 85.

<sup>33</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 12.

<sup>34</sup> Bethge observes: "Ihn hat die Ewige Stadt nicht wie andere protestantische Romfahrer entsetzt und abgestoßen; sie hat ihn im Gegenteil für immer mit Sehnsucht erfüllt." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 85.

<sup>36</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 87, footnote 24.

<sup>37</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 114.

<sup>38</sup> Alois Hahn, "Soziologie Des Fremden," in *Erfahrungen Des Fremden*, ed. Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg (Heidelberg: Heidelberg Verlag, 1993), 30.

<sup>39</sup> Hahn, "Soziologie Des Fremden," 30.

<sup>40</sup> Sundermeier explains: "Es ist umstritten, ob er wirklich als der erste anzusehen ist, der die 'Barfußmethode', wie sie von den ersten Kritikern spöttisch genannt wurde, den Ethnologen zur condition sine qua non machte, dennoch ist es keine Frage, daß seine immer sehr vage formulierte, aber höchst praktische Methode der 'teilnehmenden Beobachtung' Schule gemacht hat und zur methodischen Selbstverständlichkeit einer ganzen Ethnologengeneration, zumal englischer Provenienz wurde." Theo Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1996), 26.

<sup>41</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 26.

<sup>42</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 27.

<sup>43</sup> Sundermeier notes: "Die Veröffentlichung der Tagebücher Malinowskis 1967 verursachten einen tiefen Schock, denn sie zeigten, wie voreingenommen, emotional schwach und subjektiv engagiert Malinowski war, wie sehr Fremderfahrung und Feindbild, Vorurteile, Abscheu und Zuneigung in seiner Forschung eine Rolle spielten." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 28.

<sup>44</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 28-29.

<sup>45</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 30.

<sup>46</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 115-16. Bonhoeffer explains: "Mit unserem Priester (aus Bologna her) bin ich viel zusammen und laß mir viel von ihm erklären." His diary notes: "Nachmittag wieder St. Peter um ½ 5 mit unserm katholischen Priesterseminaristen Platte-Platenius. Jetzt ging mir zum erstenmal die Meßordnung auf, da er das Missale Romanum mithatte. Die Liturgie war fabelhaft zusammengestellt, interessant, wie die katholische Kirche Psalmen für ihre Zwecke auslegt, die ganz andere historische Bedeutung haben ... -Auf dem Rückweg lange Unterhaltung mit Platte-Platenius über die Bedeutung des Opfers in der katholischen Kirche." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 92.

<sup>47</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89.

<sup>48</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 88.

<sup>49</sup> Bonhoeffer perceives them as "Novizinnen", but the editors of the critical edition note: "Wahrscheinlich nicht Novizinnen, sondern Schülerinnen des Internats der franz. Sacré Coeur-Schwestern im Kloster ..." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89, footnote 31.

<sup>50</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89.

<sup>51</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26.

<sup>52</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26.

<sup>53</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26.

<sup>54</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>55</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 87.

<sup>56</sup> "In bezug auf seine kirchliche Herkunft sprach er in seinen Briefen aus Rom und im Tagebuch bezeichnenderweise kaum von 'Kirche', sondern immer noch von 'Protestantismus', wie es im

Elternhaus üblich war. Dieser Begriff hatte in jener liberalen Sphäre mehr Ansehnlichkeit und Relevanz." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 87.

<sup>57</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 87.

<sup>58</sup> Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 24-25.

<sup>59</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89-90.

<sup>60</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89-90. To his parents Bonhoeffers writes: "Also heute nachmittag in dem armenischen Gottesdienst spielte nur noch das Zeremoniell und Symbol eine Rolle. Das Ganze machte den Eindruck eines orientalischen, sehr poetischen Märchenspiels. Die Kostüme der Geistlichkeiten waren durchaus asiatisch, der Chor sehr merkwürdig in der Art zu singen und den Melodien. Die Zeremonien stammen aus dem 2. und 3. Jahrhundert n.Chr. und scheinen seitdem allmählich ganz erstarrt, ohne neues Leben, mit wie großem Ernst und Fanatismus auch die Leute dabei sind. Auf diesem Wege scheint aber der Katholizismus der römischen Kirche auch zu sein, wenn auch noch lange nicht so weit. Es gibt doch hier noch viele Einrichtungen, wo lebendiges religiöses Leben noch eine Rolle spielt, so z.B. der Beichtstuhl." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 115.

<sup>61</sup> Bonhoeffer continues to explain: "Unterschiedliche Völker haben wir kennen gelernt, manche von uns sind weit durch die Welt gekommen, haben die Völker und ihre verschiedenen Sitten zu sehen bekommen. Da hören wir heute von einem Volk reden, das den wenigsten von uns begegnet sein wird, und das doch jedem auch der nichts von der Welt sah als seine Vaterstadt begegnet sein könnte: es heißt das Volk Gottes. ... ein Volk im echten Sinne des Wortes ... mit eigenem Gesetz und Recht, ein Volk, das untereinander in heimlicher, geheimnisvoller Beziehung steht und wirkt für- und miteinander ganz im Stillen, unsichtbar und doch gewaltig machtvoll, ein Volk, das wie dereinst das Volk der Gralsritter den sterblichen irdischen Blicken unerfindlich war, unsichtbar blieb, ein Volk, das sich Tag um Tag und Nacht um Nacht zusammenfindet und zusammenschließt, ein Volk, das auf der Wanderschaft ist zu seiner Heimat, die in weiter Ferne herrlich schimmert und leuchtet ... ein Volk, wo einer den anderen, der auf dem Weg strauchelt, aufhebt und trägt, ein Volk kurz gesagt – das sich liebt, weil es von Gott geliebt ist. Nicht Deutschland, und nicht Frankreich und nicht Amerika, sondern ein Volk, das über die ganze Welt hinweggreift und seine Glieder hier und dort findet – und auch unter uns hat und noch sucht! Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 488-99.

<sup>62</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 486.

<sup>63</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 486.

<sup>64</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 14.

<sup>65</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 14.

<sup>66</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 35.

<sup>67</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 34-35.

<sup>68</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 23.

<sup>69</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 32. Schöffter explains: "Die daraus entstehende Faszination des Fremden, die sich in diesem Deutungsmuster aus Informationsbedarf, Abwechslungsbedürfnis, Neugierde und Wissenstransfer begründen läßt, hängt jedoch in hohem Maße von der Entwicklungsgeschwindigkeit und dem Entwicklungsstand des betreffenden 'Sinnsystems' zusammen. Wie bei allen Prozeßverläufen mit unübersehbar komplexer Eigenlogik stellen sich auch hier im Verhältnis zwischen Eigenem und Fremdem unkalkulierbare Probleme der Verfrüfung und Verspätung. Das 'Nicht-Entdecken' von systemrelativ 'wichtiger Fremdheit' kann daher weitreichende Folgen für den weiteren Entwicklungsverlauf haben." Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 32.

<sup>70</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 24.

<sup>71</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 24.

<sup>72</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 24.

<sup>73</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 17.

<sup>74</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 115.

<sup>75</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 16.

<sup>76</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 16.

<sup>77</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 486.

<sup>78</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 16.

<sup>79</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 92.

<sup>80</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.

<sup>81</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.

<sup>82</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.

<sup>83</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.



<sup>84</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 110. Bonhoeffer notes: "Papstaudienz, große Erwartungen getäuscht. Es war ziemlich unpersönlich und kühl feierlich. Der Papst [Pius XI.] macht einen ziemlich gleichgültigen Eindruck; es fehlt ihm überhaupt alles 'Päpstliche', jede Grandezza und jedes hervorragende Moment. Schade, daß das so wirkte!" Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 110.

<sup>85</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 94.

<sup>86</sup> James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London; England: Harvard University Press, 1997), 24.

<sup>87</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 92-93.

<sup>88</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 90.

<sup>89</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 90.

<sup>90</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 90.

<sup>91</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 93.

<sup>92</sup> Bethge 1994: 93}

<sup>93</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 102.

<sup>94</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 19.

<sup>95</sup> Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 21.

<sup>96</sup> Clifford Green, "Introduction," in *Fiction from Prison: Gathering up the Past*, ed. Renate and Eberhard Bethge (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), VII.

<sup>97</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 92.

<sup>98</sup> In a letter to his parents Bonhoeffer notes: "Die Kollegs, in die ich gehe, kann ich ganz gut verfolgen und sind sehr interessant. Dogmatik wird leider nicht gelesen, aber auch die Kirchengeschichte ist in so anderer Beleuchtung sehr anregend." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 129. The editors of the critical edition explain in this respect: "Kath. Theologen halten es für ausgeschlossen, daß B[onhoeffer] an einer kirchl. Universität oder Anstalt, z.B. an der Gregoriana, studierte. Zum einen war der Besuch Priesterseminaristen vorbehalten; andererseits war damals an kirchl. Instituten in Rom Latein einzig akzeptierte Lehrsprache, während B[onhoeffer] mitteilt, wie gut er dem Italienischen in den Vorlesungen habe folgen können. So besteht nur die Möglichkeit, daß er an der staatl. Universität gehört hat." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 129, footnote 2.

<sup>99</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 134-35.

<sup>100</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 583.

<sup>101</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Die Eroberung Amerikas. Das Problem Des Anderen*, 1982, translated by Wilfried Böhringer (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985). Summing up Todorov's narratives into four different types of encounter Sundermeier maintains: "Diese Begegnungen sind von exemplarischer Bedeutung, denn alle Spielarten der Fremdwahrnehmung, wie sie sich in den folgenden Jahrhunderten herauskristallisieren, sind hier schon zu finden." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 20.

<sup>102</sup> Sundermeier refers to the Jesuit mission in China and Japan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as one important exception, which unfortunately failed in its attempt but anticipated a later more positive development: "Sie [die Jesuitenmission in China und Japan] kann als 'Anpassung ohne Aufgabe der eigenen Identität' charakterisiert werden. In einer bemerkenswerten Weise haben sich die Jesuiten in die Kultur, Denkweise und Religiosität der anderen hineinbegeben und darin ihr Christsein verwirklichen wollen. Daß ihr Versuch der christlichen Inkulturation, wie man heute sagen würde, von Rom unterbrochen, ja verboten wurde, unterstreicht die These, daß Europa im anderen nur sich selbst wie in einem Spiegel sehen kann oder seine eigene Kultur ausbreiten will. Erst unter dem Einfluß der ohne Herde nicht denkbaren Volkstumsromantik des späten 19.Jh. begann sich in der Mission an wenigen Stellen ein anderes Bewußtsein durchzusetzen, das aber erst nach dem II.Vaticandum zur vollen Entfaltung kam, sowohl auf katholischer wie auf evangelischer Seite." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 24, footnote 10.

<sup>103</sup> Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 24, footnote 11. Sundermeier sums up: "Trotz der zahlreichen Entdeckungen, trotz des schier unerschöpflichen Anwachsens des Weltwissens im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert, trotz des Vorstoßes von Herder, die Kulturen der anderen Völker in ihren Besonderheiten zu würdigen, trotz oder gerade wegen der philosophischen Bemühungen, die Menschen der anderen Welten in das eigene System einzubeziehen, trotz der Fülle neuer Kenntnisse über bis dahin unbekannte Sprachen, Ethnien, Religionen bleibt es doch bei dem doppelten Bild vom Fremden: Er ist das alter ego in positiver oder negativer Gestalt." Sundermeier, *Den Fremden Verstehen. Eine Praktische Hermeneutik*, 24.

<sup>104</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 37-39.

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- <sup>105</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 37-39.
- <sup>106</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 583.
- <sup>107</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 583.
- <sup>108</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 93.
- <sup>109</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 88.
- <sup>110</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89.
- <sup>111</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 25.
- <sup>112</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 25.
- <sup>113</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 25.
- <sup>114</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 87.
- <sup>115</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 94.
- <sup>116</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 89.
- <sup>117</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 86.
- <sup>118</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 134-35.
- <sup>119</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 106.
- <sup>120</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 106.
- <sup>121</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 106.
- <sup>122</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 106.
- <sup>123</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 106.
- <sup>124</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 111.

### 3. Occupied Tripolis

#### *Introduction*

North Africa provided Bonhoeffer with an encounter of the Oriental, the African and the Muslim "other". Given the colonial context of his visit to occupied Tripolis the following analysis will attempt to expand on Schäffter's "modi der Fremderfahrung" by drawing on Spurr's and Behdad's insights into the repertoire of rhetorical strategies characteristic of colonial discourse. These insights not only provide us with a critical set of tools to further deepen Schäffter's basic categories of "Fremdverstehen" but also open up a fresh and relevant interpretation of Bonhoeffer's terms "phraseological" and "real".

Since my research was being done in South Africa it was especially exciting to discover that Bonhoeffer managed to interrupt his Italian journey by including a short excursion to North Africa. What appeared to be a spontaneous decision and unexpected detour from the "center" later on presented itself in a new light. For it anticipated an intriguing remark on the educational value of classical antiquity Bonhoeffer made in a letter from prison:

Ob nicht die Kenntnis anderer Länder und die innere Berührung mit ihnen für uns heute ein viel bedeutenderes Element der Bildung ist als die Antike? Natürlich gibt es in beiden Fällen ein Banausentum; aber vielleicht gehört es zu unseren Aufgaben, die Begagnung mit anderen Völkern und Ländern über das Politische, Gesellschaftliche oder Snobistische hinaus zu einem wirklichen Bildungserlebnis zu gestalten. Damit würde ein bisher ungenutzt gelassener Strom für unsere Bildung fruchtbar gemacht und zugleich an eine alte europäische Überlieferung angeknüpft.<sup>1</sup>

Bonhoeffer's travel writings of his journey from Classic and Catholic Rome to Arabic and Islamic Tripoli not only introduce us to a foreign country, but also epitomize the very contrast to classical antiquity Bonhoeffer must be thinking of. His reflections convey great appreciation for his travels abroad and emphasize the importance of reviving the old European tradition of encouraging intercultural encounters. Bonhoeffer

highlights their potential for what he describes as a "real educational experience". Envisioned is an encounter which transcends mere political, social or snobbish engagement. These remarks shed further light on what Bonhoeffer might have meant with his turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen." "Phraseological" seems to stand for what he describes above as narrow-minded Philistinism ("Banausentum"). It is contrasted with a "real" learning experience in the sense of enabling a genuine encounter which aspires to a more intimate contact ("innere Berührung") with the cultural "other".

Such high estimation of intercultural exposure resonates with Humanism's important contribution of offering "a positive ideology of travel as education within a system of lay, secular learning ..."<sup>2</sup> It is seen to have "made the empirical traveler who had been emerging since the late middle ages not only as authoritative but also an admirable figure."<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, his North African diary also illustrates the cultural shock that can come with such a first-hand contact with a foreign culture. His notes portray "a powerful ego" challenged to its very limits. They convey an encounter which in the end quite literally left him breathless and with a sense of intellectual capitulation.

### *The Oriental, African and Muslim "Other"*

It is in Sicily that Bonhoeffer's growing anticipation of the Orient is associated with the sensual experience of entering a garden filled with sweet fragrances and mysterious flowers.

Also am Vormittag gingen wir noch nach San Giovanni<sup>4</sup>, das mich ungeheuer reizte mit seinem durchaus orientalischen Ansehen. Unglaublich verlockend stiegen süße Düfte im Garten von allerhand wunderlichen Blumen auf. Man ahnte den Orient voraus, ohne zu wissen, daß man ja bald all das als selbstverständliche Umgebung täglich um sich sehen sollte und phantasierte sich vieles zusammen, so wie man es in Deutschland über Italien getan hatte.<sup>5</sup>

Once again, similar to his border crossing into Italy, Bonhoeffer admits how different one's imaginations about another culture are from its actual reality. Indulging in such

fantasies is perceived to never expand one's own horizon: "Und immer wieder merkt man: diese Phantasien sind so ganz anders als die Wirklichkeit, so viel schwülstiger, farbiger, und erst die Wirklichkeit bringt Plastik in dieses Bild, durch Phantasien erweitert sich der Horizont nie, nur weil die plastischen Perspektiven fehlen ..." <sup>6</sup> Bonhoeffer grapples with the difference between imagination and reality by highlighting how the most beautiful colours of a painting suddenly fade when changing one's native canvas with another. Hence the new world can only emerge once one's prejudices and fantasies have surrendered to the direct encounter with the alien "other" which cannot be measured according to one's own standards:

Man kann über ein Land lesen, was man will: es bleibt jede Vorstellung gleichsam ein Gemälde in herrlichsten Farben, aber auf heimatlicher Leinwand gemalt; wenn nun erst dieser heimatliche Hintergrund fehlt, sind auch die herrlichsten Farben nichts mehr und so steht man im Orient, wenn erst einmal heimatliche Vorurteile gefallen sind und damit herrliche Phantasieen vor etwas ganz und gar Neuem mit unseren Maßstäben Unmeßbarem und erst jetzt beginnt allmählich sich das verschwommene Bild von früher zu konsolidieren, plastischer zu werden und es entsteht in einem eine neue Welt, von jeder Seite, aus jeder Straßenecke wächst sie einem zu, alte Schleier fallen und weit schönere Dinge werden wirklich. <sup>7</sup>

Such an encounter poses the kind of "Grenzerfahrung" Schöffter's associates with the category of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität". But the way the discovery of this new world is dramatized by Bonhoeffer as an act of unveiling expresses the desire to see beyond the surfaces. <sup>8</sup> It thereby illustrates well how woven into this "Grenzerfahrung" is Schöffter's understanding of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild" in the sense of it assuming "die zunehmend konkretere Bedeutung einer verführerischen unzulässigen Alternative zur reduzierten Eigenheit." <sup>9</sup> It resembles the erotically charged language characteristic of orientalist generalizations and presents the newly discovered territory as a site of seduction. Bonhoeffer might not have been aware of those connotations when using the common idiomatic phrase of unveiling. But given the well documented history of allegorization of colonized nations in terms of the female body these associations cannot be denied. Spurr explains how "The rhetorical gesture in which an entire people is allegorized by the figure of the female body has its sources in fantasies of seduction, in

imaginary scenes representing the fulfillment of sexual desire. Such fantasies in their endless variation date from the early stages of European discovery and dominion over the non-Western world.”<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to determine to what extent Bonhoeffer’s use of this metaphor also reveals the repressed sexual content of the voyage. But it certainly illustrates the seductive role of the Orient in the Western imagination suggesting “sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies ...”<sup>11</sup> According to Spurr these scenes of unveiling also create a specifically erotic context for certain fundamental qualities of colonial discourse. For “the removal of the veil serves as a visual metaphor for ideas of opening and discovery everywhere implicit in the discourse.”<sup>12</sup>

The image of the veil continues to be an important metaphor when Bonhoeffer compares the encounter with the Orient to the experience of viewing a beautiful sunrise through the slowly vanishing veils the morning fog creates. It suggests “the look [which] is drawn by the play of highlights ... through a veil; it is the intermittence of light that attracts, in a titillating game of revelation and concealment, of now you see it, now you don’t.”<sup>13</sup> But it also illustrates how “The gradual removal of the veil corresponds to the progressive conquest of interior space.”<sup>14</sup>

Die erste Reise in den Orient ist einem herrlichen Sonnenaufgang zu vergleichen. Herrliche Nebel künden in phantastischen Farben mit unwiderstehlichem Reize das Kommen der Sonne an. Aber sie künden doch nur an. Leise, aber nur in fernster Ferne ahnt man das, was werden soll, immer herrlicher werden die Schleier; aber kaum ist der erste Strahl der Sonne selbst gekommen, als auch schon die Wolken und Nebel fliehen müssen und je größer der Ball der Sonne wird, desto mehr verschwinden die Nebel im Gleichgültigen, bis sie endlich da ist ganz in ihrer Herrlichkeit und alle Phantasien waren umsonst, denn sie ist da als gegebene Größe und wir stehen stumm und müssen hinnehmen was da ist. <sup>15</sup>

Interestingly the decisive moment of revelation is not pictured as conquest but as an encounter which leaves the traveler mute and defenseless. An “aesthetics of silence”<sup>16</sup> emerges the minute all imagination has to give way to the real. It is a silence which equals the practice of nonrepresentation. In Bonhoeffer’s view however it is a silence not

chosen but imposed. The way the subject is pictured as suffering the emerging presence of the “other” suggests the ambivalence of both a genuine “Grenzerfahrung” and an experience of the “other” as seductive alternative. But these diary notes still precede Bonhoeffer’s actual encounter with the Oriental “other” and reflect a process of great anticipation and inner preparation. For it was only after a three day visit to Girgenti and another day trip to Syrakus that Bonhoeffer, his brother and another recent German acquaintance board the ship for Tripolis.<sup>17</sup>

Writing to their parents, Klaus Bonhoeffer offers a few intriguing details about their voyage across the Mediterranean.<sup>18</sup> They travel third class (“Zwischendeck”) in the company of a most diverse band of travelers. Their stop at Malta also confronts them with open animosity towards Germans from the side of the English governor.<sup>19</sup> As a result they are not allowed to leave the ship throughout the six hour stop. This experience combined with reflections on the very privileged status of Germans in Italy - contrasted to the Italian hatred towards the French – opens a small window into the difficult political climate of the day.<sup>20</sup>

All together they spent ten days in North Africa, visiting Tripolis and the Libyan desert. Bonhoeffer’s diary is written in telegraphic style and conveys very little about their actual encounters and experiences in Tripolis. It is only on the evening of their departure that Bonhoeffer resumes a more detailed reflection of their stay. I therefore rely mainly on his brother’s and his own letters to their parents written during the time of their visit. Their careful descriptions of occupied Tripolis convey a high degree of sensitivity to the politically delicate situation Italy’s colonial invasion had created and show a genuine desire to observe and understand. Their accounts mirror their ambivalent experience of both being tourists and acting as amateur ethnographers. Their “Fremderfahrungen” prove to predominantly evolve around “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” in the sense that “auch triviale Erfahrungsweisen und Beschreibungen des Fremden mythisch-traumhaft erscheinen ...”<sup>21</sup> They are caught between what Behdad describes as “a fantasy of the Orient as a dream world where ... [one’s] desires are realized and an image of Oriental society as an unattainable, concealed domain of absolute repression.”<sup>22</sup> For on the one

hand Klaus Bonhoeffer revels in the dream-like experience of his encounter: "Mir ist es jetzt noch immer wie ein Traum, wenn ich auf die Straße gehe und sehe die Araber, Beduinen und Neger in dem großen, malerischen, weißen Überwurf auf Eseln oder mit beladenen Kamelen."<sup>23</sup> His comments reveal a sense of melancholy and that "enchantment which European travelers have traditionally associated with the Orient since the pre-romantic period: namely, the enchantment of slow-paced, ritualized movement, of mythic landscapes as old as Homer and the bible"<sup>24</sup>. The sensation of dreaming is combined with that of being transported to an ancient past: "Zum Sonnenuntergang waren wir heute vor der Stadt am Meer. Es ziehen sich dort an der Küste Wälder von Dattelpalmen hin. Ich werde dauernd an die Erzählungen aus dem Alten Testament erinnert. Araber, Juden und Schwarze zogen [mit] ihren Kamelen und Eseln zu den Zisternen. Man ist ganz im Morgenland ohne auch nur irgendwie an Europa erinnert zu werden."<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, the dream-like sensation does not release him from the weight of historical and material reality.<sup>26</sup> He is deeply aware of the fear instilled among the local people by the Italian invasion suggesting an atmosphere of suspicion and alienation: "Dafür ist hier die Bevölkerung sehr verängstigt. Sie fürchtet jeden Europäer. Auf der Straße wird einem Platz gemacht."<sup>27</sup> Though in no way comprehensive, the brothers' notes convey an ability of observation which not only provide the reader with information on Oriental customs, ceremonies, attitudes, and habits, but also identify the signature of imperial occupation. A clear hierarchy of power is delineated with the Italian colonist dominating the Arab, the Arab in turn looking down on both the Jew and the black African.<sup>28</sup> The latter is perceived to constitute the lowest class and be especially submissive.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly the reason for the Jews being treated by the Arabs as lower class was their eagerness to engage with the stranger for the sake of making profit.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, the kind of "Ruhe und Gemessenheit und Abgeschlossenheit gegen die Fremden"<sup>31</sup> Bonhoeffer encounters on the market is understood to be characteristic of the Arab.



Continuing along those lines their letters even produce a physiognomic interpretation of the native's temperament. Klaus Bonhoeffer remarks on the Arab's appearance and movement as having inherently aesthetic value: "Der Araber wahrt auf der Straße viel mehr Würde als der Italiener. Er schreitet oft mit Grandezza einher. Begrüßungen vollziehen sich in Ruhe. Auch wenn sie abends bei der Wasserpfeife miteinander sitzen, hört man kein Schreien."<sup>32</sup> It is an aesthetic stance taken from within a position of power and privilege.<sup>33</sup> For the power to perceive the idiosyncrasies of dignity and "Grandezza" as aesthetic value is a privilege not granted to the oppressed "other" for whom these expressions become strategies of resistance and survival. According to Spurr the rhetoric of aestheticization has to be spoken of as "distantiation, transformation, privilege, displacement, consumption, and alienation."<sup>34</sup> These terms are perceived to "imply a certain possession of social reality which holds it at arm's length and makes it into the object of beauty, horror, pleasure, and pity."<sup>35</sup> Spurr therefore suggests that "aestheticization does not so much falsify as it takes hold of and commodifies reality, securing it for the expansion of the observer's sensibility."<sup>36</sup>

While describing their visit to a market outside of Tripolis Dietrich in his own letter deploys a combination of aesthetic mediation and physiognomic interpretation: "Die Neger sind hier teils Abessinier – die Soldaten mit oft sehr intelligenten Gesichtern und guten Gestalten, teils die wahnsinnig häßlichen aus dem Sudan Zugewanderten, die hier einfach als Vieh behandelt werden."<sup>37</sup> The brothers' aesthetic judgments proceed from the surveillant Western eye which treats the colonial body as a landscape and resonate with the role of the body in classic colonial discourse: "The bodies, not only of so-called primitive peoples but of all the colonized, have been a focal point of colonialist interest which, as in the case of landscape description, proceeds from the visual to various kinds of valorization ..."<sup>38</sup> These include "the material value of the body as labor supply, its aesthetic value as object of artistic representation, its ethical value as a mark of innocence or degradation, its scientific value as evidence of racial difference or inferiority, its humanitarian value as the sign of suffering, its erotic value as the object of desire."<sup>39</sup> The contrast of judgment between the Arabs and the Sudanese immigrants in particular is further heightened by Dietrich's indignation about the way Arabs are treated like slaves:

"Aber am meisten muß es einen hier doch entrüsten, wie sogar ein Volk mit einer so entwickelten Tradition und Kultur, wie die Araber es sind, zu Sklaven gemacht werden sollen."<sup>40</sup> The statement evokes the cultural superiority of the Arab over the Abyssinians and Sudanese whose "body, rather than speech, law, or history, is the essential defining characteristic ..."<sup>41</sup>

But Klaus Bonhoeffer's remark on the late colonization of Tripolis also reveals to what degree their excursions are driven by the desire to experience Arabic culture in its most original and authentic form: "Es soll hier in Tripolis, was erst seit 1912 italienische Kolonie ist, das Volksleben noch viel ursprünglicher und von Europa unberührt sein als in Algier und Tunis."<sup>42</sup> It resonates with what we identified as the tourist's quest for authenticity. This is further illustrated by their "field trip" into the country to Garian, 100 kilometers south of Tripolis reflecting the tourist's attempt to overcome what Goffman described as "the front region."<sup>43</sup> Following Goffman's concept of "staged authenticity" the brothers' trip is driven by the desire to enter the "imaginary, the ideal, uncontaminated back region."<sup>44</sup> And yet the unexpected opportunity to attend a day of games and performances suggests a back region that falls into Goffman's category stage five, for it appears to be "organized in recognition of visits from tourists ..."<sup>45</sup> Bonhoeffer is especially impressed by the Bedouins' horse races, while the "Negertanz" is described as simply "amüsant".<sup>46</sup> It is very telling that all we hear about the black Africans apart from their physiognomy is their ecstatic devotion to dance and music which illustrates a traditional European stereotype in terms of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild". For according to Martin Stein it represents a decisive new phase in representing the African "other": "Neu ist hier, daß er [der Tanz] im Versuch, den Kern einer rassischen Eigenart zu definieren, zum zentralen Element zugespitzt wird und in ein antinomisches Verhältnis zum Europäer gesetzt wird."<sup>47</sup> But also the Southern night sky and its twinkling stars offer a powerful, novel sensation and are said to explain not only the Orient's intense occupation with the stars, but also the "natives'" fear of them as demons.<sup>48</sup> Observing the return of life in the streets just before sundown stirs up a dreamy melancholy of Old Testament scenes and moods.<sup>49</sup> The village life is rendered in images of the Holy Land as if Bonhoeffer's own "disorientation in that world could only be

managed by a *re*-orientation of experience within the framework of a distant historical era.”<sup>50</sup> Finally, due to complications most probably related to the fact that the hinterland was not yet pacified, Bonhoeffer and his brother were escorted away as unwelcome guests by Italian military officers.<sup>51</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s observations end with comparative note on Islam and Old Testament living and piety. In this respect Bonhoeffer’s experiences of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” reveal how “Das Gegenbild des Fremden ... indes auch zum positiven Gegensatz einer *negativ* erlebten Eigenheit umschlagen [kann].”<sup>52</sup> He notices a strong unity of life and religion in stark contrast to the Church’s traditional separation of spheres, i.e. the secular and the religious:

In so einem ganzen Tagelauf im Orient wird man erstaunlich erinnert an alttestamentliche Szenen und Stimmungen. Überhaupt scheint mir zwischen Islam und alttestamentlicher Lebensführung und Frömmigkeit eine ungeheure Ähnlichkeit zu bestehen. Im Islam ist alltägliches Leben und Religion gar nicht getrennt, wie in der gesamten, auch katholischen, christlichen Kirche. Bei uns geht man eben in die Kirche; und wenn man zurück kommt, beginnt wieder ein ganz andres Leben.<sup>53</sup>

Hence Tripolis introduced him to the fascinating unity of daily life and religious practice, offering a strong contrast experience to Western divisions of the secular and religious sphere.<sup>54</sup> It signals the early beginning of what is to become an important aspect of his reflections in *Widerstand und Ergebung* on the theme of religionless Christianity, in particular his critique of the traditional thinking in spheres.<sup>55</sup> Bonhoeffer then continues to argue that Islam’s and Judaism’s more holistic approach is due to their strong racial identity and male pride: “zum wesentlichen liegt das an dem Juden und Arabern gleichen Zug des kolossal ausgeprägten Rassegefühles und –stolzes. Der Araber trennt sich von jedem Andersrassigen wie der Mensch vom Tier.”<sup>56</sup> The Arabs’ exclusivism is said to provide the rationale for their violent response towards unbelievers in the past: “Mohamed ist der Prophet des Stammes der Araber, daher die durchaus fehlende Tendenz zur Propaganda jetzt wie früher, wo man nicht versuchte, die Christen zu missionieren, sondern sie einfach als Nicht-Araber, d.h. Ungläubige umbrachte. ... So ist

auch der Krieg ein Dienst an Mohamed und Allah.”<sup>57</sup> Bonhoeffer’s argument is guided by “the belief in essences that govern the behavior of one people or another ...”<sup>58</sup> His interpretation reads like a set-piece description and is flawed with stereotypes and historical generalizations which seem to assume that Islam has an inherently aggressive and violent nature. It resonates with Said’s castigation of Orientalism “for its construction of static images rather than historical or personal ‘narratives’.”<sup>59</sup> The result is that “The ‘human experience,’ whether that of the individual Orient or of his or her objects of study, is flattened into an asserted authority on one side and a generalization on the other.”<sup>60</sup> Such rhetoric of generalization is once again illustrated in Bonhoeffer’s attempt to classify both Islam and Judaism as religions of the law:

Beide Religionen – Islam und israelitische Frömmigkeit – müssen natürlich ausgesprochene Gesetzesreligionen sein, wenn nationale und kultische Momente so stark vermischt sind, ja sozusagen zusammenfallen. Nur so können sie schärfste Abgrenzung von den andern Rassen und Religionen erreichen. Eine Religion, die Weltreligion sein will, wie Christentum oder Buddhismus kann gar nicht Gesetzesreligion sein. Ein mohammedanischer Neger ist in den Augen des arabischen Mohammedaners ein Neger nach wie vor, Bekehrung gibt es eigentlich nicht.<sup>61</sup>

Our analysis so far has shown how Bonhoeffer’s experience of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” is clothed in a range of traditional stereotypes about the Oriental “other”. It oscillates between the “other” as negation and the “other” as seductive alternative. This ambivalent experience of both fascination and threat is directed towards “eine feste und klar definierte Grenzlinie, mit der die Integrität der Eigenheit bewahrt und geschützt werden soll.”<sup>62</sup> It is in this sense that Bonhoeffer’s encounters can be interpreted as an ongoing negotiation between his need for both clear and safe boundaries and his fascination with disclosing and unsettling veils. There is of course an important difference between boundaries actively drawn in order to safeguard identity and those boundaries that Schäffter discusses in the context of genuine “Grenzerfahrungen”. As I have already shown at the beginning, it was the imaginary lifting of the veil which Bonhoeffer associated with such a boundary not drawn by himself but imposed upon him

by the powerful “other”. It was portrayed as a moment of surrender to the alien “other” imposing a profound silence of non-representation.

Interestingly it was on the eve of their departure to Europe that Bonhoeffer’s diary notes convey the actual experience of such a genuine “Grenzerfahrung”. Tripolis’ otherness has become a real threat instilling an immense longing for Europe: “Unvorbereitet darf man nicht länger nach Afrika gehen, der Schreck ist zu groß und steigert sich von Tag zu Tag, so daß man sich freut, wieder nach Europa zu kommen.”<sup>63</sup> We read about how, after a peaceful crossing back to Sicily’s Syrakus, Dietrich and his brother enjoy the sunset at Taormina’s Greek theater. He marvels at the indescribable beauty of the atmosphere surrounding the theater’s ruins. Their view is magnificent. With the Aetna posing in front of them their glance moves across the quiet ocean toward the Italian shore rising from the waters in the evening mist. In recalling this moment Bonhoeffer expresses tremendous relief to be back in Europe. His language is dramatic and hyperbolic revealing the extent to which Bonhoeffer felt completely overpowered by the Oriental “other”: “Zum erstenmal atmete man wieder auf, wie Fesseln war es, die einem von den Gliedern genommen wurden ...”<sup>64</sup> It is the sight of European trees and “Üppigkeit im Land” which creates a sense of finally being safe and home. For “nach nichts hatte man sich ja in Africa so geseht wie nach einem schönen deutschen Wald ...”<sup>65</sup> Bonhoeffer, the young German aristocrat, had found himself culturally overwhelmed and intellectually imprisoned. It was a genuine “Grenzerfahrung” in the sense that he had to, as Bonhoeffer confesses, “in Afrika alles hinnehmen müssen ohne Maßstab, ja überhaupt ohne die Möglichkeit mitzuempfinden ...”<sup>66</sup> He felt condemned “zur vollständigen Passivität”<sup>67</sup> and continues to admit: “hatte man in Afrika oft so vergeblich versucht und herumgeirrt, um sich in eine Stimmung der Situation entsprechend zu versetzen, war man so also oft zur einfachen Aufnahme und vielleicht späterer Verarbeitung genötigt, so schwoll Empfindung und Verständnis für europäisches Land immer mehr an, und mit Begeisterung schwelgte man in einer Landschaft seines Heimatgefühls.”<sup>68</sup> In describing his experience as having being forced “zur einfachen Aufnahme” Bonhoeffer portrays an encounter with the “other” who resists representation. To further illustrate the tremendous

impact of this encounter Bonhoeffer draws on the metaphor of an empty vessel threatening to break:

Es war, als seien in Afrika in ein noch ganz leeres Gefäß ungeheure Mengen schwersten Materials geworfen und dieses Gefäß sei nicht genügend fundiert und drohe, wenn nicht bald Unterstützung kommt, durchzubrechen und das Material werde in unermessene Tiefen fallen, verlorengehen und dabei manchen Schaden anrichten. War nun auch dieses Gefäß durch die neuen Eindrücke unterstützt worden, so wurde doch wenigstens für einige Zeit die Aufmerksamkeit auf etwas anderes gelenkt, derweil sich das Material im Gefäß setzen und festigen konnte. Bald aber ist wirkliche Unterstützung durch eingehende Studien vonnöten, damit nicht die Katastrophe geschieht; denn es war ungeheuer, was man gesehen hatte.<sup>69</sup>

The “Kulturschock” expressed in these reflections mirrors Bonhoeffer’s inability to properly process and integrate the unfamiliar. It once again illustrates how “Die zentrifugal nach außen drängenden ‘Assimilationsgelüste’ ... ihren Gegenpol in der zentripetalen Bewegung einer Sicherung der internen Verarbeitungsmöglichkeiten [finden].”<sup>70</sup> Bonhoeffer’s language in this respect is both transparent and secretive. The dangerous impact of the encounter is explained on the one hand as the overwhelming and potentially destructive vitality of the “other”, and on the other hand the observer’s unexpected fragility depicted as “ein noch ganz leeres Gefäß ...” The vessel appears to lack the appropriate categories and rationality to contain the intruding material. Its tremendous weight is perceived to be threatening and even harmful if not processed in time.

But why would the possible loss of such material, i.e. its falling into “unmeasurable depths”, pose such danger and harm? Bonhoeffer’s experience of being unable to assign measure and direction to what he encountered in Tripolis creates the fear of a devouring abyss powerful enough to annihilate these experiences. Bonhoeffer’s concern receives new urgency when read in the light of how “The metaphor of Africa as a spatial void survives in Western writing long after exploration has filled in the blank spaces on the map.”<sup>71</sup> Christopher Miller, for example, highlights how in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* Africa becomes “the *figure* of darkness and nothingness.”<sup>72</sup> Hence, the kind of harm

generated by the loss of those experiences rings true with what Spurr identifies as “the rhetorical strategy of negation by which Western writing conceives of the “other” as absence, emptiness, nothingness, or death.”<sup>73</sup> Such rhetoric imparts a calculated response to a puzzling and overwhelming experience of the “other” and reveals two basic characteristics: “first, negation serves to reject the ambiguous object for which language and experience provide no adequate framework of interpretation; second, ... negation acts as a kind of provisional erasure, clearing a space of the expansion of the colonial imagination and for the pursuit of desire.”<sup>74</sup>

There is a discourse of negation in the writing about the non-Western world which represents colonized people “in terms of negation and absence – absence of order, of limits, of light, of spirit.”<sup>75</sup> European expansion is seen to fill this original void with the presence of history. This perceived absence of history is understood to exhibit a double absence – “of history as written text and of history as movement toward a destiny.”<sup>76</sup> Spurr points out, for example, how in a vulgarized version of Hegel the absence of a written text correlates with the absence of history itself, and how history then becomes a matter of writing and difference. It is argued that “The Africans lack a history because they have failed to leave a permanent mark on the landscape – no ancient architecture, no monuments or records – nothing to bring about the transformation and construction of the environment which provide the measure of civilization.”<sup>77</sup> “This lack of inscription”, in turn, “becomes the sign of another failure – the failure to mark the difference between nature and its others, between present and past, between presence and absence.”<sup>78</sup>

Spurr adds another aspect of negation which is seen to combine elements of the psychological and the metaphysical suggesting “that the representation of non-Western reality as nothingness in its various forms actually serves as the projection of a more radical absence in Western consciousness.”<sup>79</sup> He refers to the work of Conrad who demonstrates, “there is a void at the center of consciousness that must be named or given an image in order that it be contained.”<sup>80</sup> But Bonhoeffer’s final comment on an impending catastrophe also introduces a much more personal and existential note. It resonates with what Miller identified as another thread running through the Africanist

tradition in European literature: "The writer's experience of alienation from his own meaning, of alienation as meaning itself ..." <sup>81</sup> It explains how, as Spurr highlights, the Orient has been used in Western writing "as a space against which the West defines or orients itself, and as a source of dazzling, disorienting brilliance." <sup>82</sup>

Bonhoeffer's confession testifies to both the difficulty Europeans have in analyzing Africa and the fear of alienation. But he recognizes the limitations of the conventions of Western discourse and suggests a cultural counter-practice – a continuous and in-depth study of the cultural "other" – which would create a vessel strong enough to hold the foreign material. In one of his letters to his parents towards the end of their trip Bonhoeffer expresses great interest in further study of Islam in its own context, acknowledging the limits of his understanding due to a lack of insider knowledge. <sup>83</sup> But how could such an in-depth study avoid the danger of yet again taming and silencing the "other" given the interpretative nature of such endeavor? Pratt therefore rightly asks in response to Said's *Orientalism*: "Can one ultimately escape procedures of dichotomizing, restructuring, and textualizing in the making of interpretive statements about foreign cultures and traditions?" <sup>84</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Bonhoeffer's voyage of discovery began with the expressed desire to transcend the Western catalog of prejudice and fantasies. But the symbolic rending of the veil infused not only a sense of fascination and adventure, but also feelings of chaos and terror. He was aware that one's own imagination can never expand one's horizon. A direct encounter with reality was needed. Only then could the new world emerge which would resist the closed system of one's own expectations and representations. <sup>85</sup> But how real, then, was the new reality Bonhoeffer encountered? To be sure, Dietrich's and Klaus' accounts testify to the strength of imperialist fantasies. The Orient's "exotic" image repertoire is coupled with ethnocentric representations of the Islamic world as a locus of religious zeal and ethnic pride. The reality of the Orient is mediated through the cultural "baggage" these German travelers carry with them. The image repertoire of Old



Testament tales comes between them and the immediate reality constituting an intertext which “haunts” their imagination.<sup>86</sup> One could argue that their experience of the Orient had been meaningful only in relation to this particular intertext. Hence, as Behdad points out, the orientalist representation is always a re-presentation of the Orient: “The narrative of the voyage is not, and perhaps, one should add, cannot be, a direct transcription of the reality seen by the enunciating subject; it is either a rewriting of the precursor’s text – from which he derives his authority – or the re-experience of a phantasmatic text.”<sup>87</sup> He continues to explain how “The subject’s inauguration into the field of desire always passes through the ‘defiles’ of signifiers that are purely textual. As a result, the subject’s desire for the Orient is not the desire for the ‘other’; rather, it is a desire defined for him by ‘the orientalist intertext.’”<sup>88</sup>

The extent to which the intertext implicates the traveler can be seen in the way Klaus Bonhoeffer’s “real” experience of Tripolis appears like a dream in which everything is thrown into the biblical past. The danger is that “As the boundaries of the real and the imaginary blur, the subject’s dreams, perceived through his earlier readings, eventually gain the status of the real.”<sup>89</sup> And yet, Bonhoeffer’s final surrender to the Oriental “other” - his acknowledgment of not being able to understand and his experience of a clear and firm boundary - also testifies to what Behdad refers to as “psychological splits” and “narrative uncertainties” in every oriental representation: “... there are divisions and vacillations, affirmative signs and interventionary gestures, departing moves and returning tendencies, constructive attempts and disruptive shifts.”<sup>90</sup> In this sense his acknowledgement of the deficiency of European norms to measure the Orient demonstrates how every interpretation of the Orient is, as Said proposes, a rebuilding of it. Bonhoeffer’s accounts illustrate that “repetition always produces difference, that restructuring comes with diffracting and differentiating effects, effects that can be critical of orientalist assumptions.”<sup>91</sup> In Bonhoeffer’s case the encounter even interrupts and silences the process of re-presentation.

This particular experience of a strong boundary positions Bonhoeffer’s encounter, as I have explained before, within Schäffter’s fourth *modus* of “Fremdheit als

Komplementarität". In comparison to the other *modi* this fourth *modus* is perceived to be the only *modus* of encounter which does not subsume the "other" but acknowledges "Nicht-Verstehbarkeit": "Es handelt sich dabei keineswegs um eine Verweigerung von Verstehen, sondern um die Anerkennung einer Grenzerfahrung im Sinne einer bedeutungsvollen Einsicht in eine konkrete Grenzlinie eigener Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten."<sup>92</sup> Within this interpretative framework of "komplementärer Fremdheit" the "Anerkennung einer *gegenseitigen Differenz*", the "*Offenhalten interner Perspektiven*", and the "Verweigerung der gesellschaftlich präformierten Antithetik des 'Entweder-Oder'", constitutes a model of encounter which begins with resisting any act of cultural translation and encourages submission to the "Inifitesimal der zwischen den Partnern liegenden geschichtlichen Distanz ..."<sup>93</sup> Such a "non-engagement" of the cultural "other" implies "das verzweifelte Verfahren, durch Ablenkung von den herkömmlichen schematischen Denkgesetzen ... zur Beschreibung jener 'Fixierungen' vorzustößen, die sich zwischen Ich und Umwelt stets neu konstituieren und die dann so kompliziert sind, weil das Ich nie bloß erkennend bleibt, sondern sich diesem Erkenntnisprozeß stets auch selbst unterwirft."<sup>94</sup> In this sense the strong emphasis on difference as the foundation of "komplementärer Fremdheit" forces the traveler to accept the paradoxical situation that "Erst wenn wir *bewußte* Eurozentriker sind, vermögen wir das Fremde unvoreingenommen ... wahrzunehmen."<sup>95</sup> Bonhoeffer's sudden recognition of his profound longing "nach einem schönen deutschen Wald" and his great relief of being back on European ground reveals how a genuine "Grenzerfahrung" corresponds with such a conscious eurocentrism.

Read against the backdrop of his North African detour, then, Bonhoeffer's turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" is essentially about an imposed "Grenzerfahrung" which transpires as an experience of terror and the profound understanding of not understanding. It is an experience of the "other" as firm boundary which anticipates and informs, as I will show in the last chapter, Bonhoeffer's attempt in *Sanctorum Communio* to formulate a Christian social philosophy which suggests an understanding of the "other" as constituting a "concrete ethical boundary" countering idealism's powerful "knowing I". "Phraseology" as a contrast term is thus about a colonial thinking in closed and

controlling systems, imaginary worlds and dreamlike sensations as interpreted within Schöffter's first three *modi* of "Fremderfahrung". The turning "zum Wirklichen" in turn is about the acknowledgement of not understanding, an aesthetics of silence, a confrontation with the weight of historical and material reality, a surrender to the terror of the alien "other".

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 354-55.

<sup>2</sup> Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Introduction," in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, Critical Views (London: Reaction Books, 1999), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Elsner and Rubiés, "Introduction," 46.

<sup>4</sup> San Giovanni degli Eremiti, 1132 von den Normannen im Stil einer Moschee erbaut.

<sup>5</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Pfeifer, vol. 9 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1986), 96-97.

<sup>6</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 97.

<sup>7</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 97.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1994), 23.

<sup>9</sup> Ortfried Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schöffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 20.

<sup>10</sup> David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1993), 173.

<sup>11</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 174.

<sup>12</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 174-75.

<sup>13</sup> Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton; New Jersey: Princeton university press, 1991), 176.

<sup>14</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 175.

<sup>15</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 96-97.

<sup>16</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 55.

<sup>17</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 98-99.

<sup>18</sup> "Dort war ein buntes Gewimmel, Militär, Auswanderer, Türken, Araber, dabei war es die liebenswürdigste Reisegesellschaft, die man sich denken konnte. Man bekam Südwein, Zigaretten usw. angeboten. Die Soldaten verschafften uns Fleisch und Nudeln, bis ich endlich alles wieder von mir geben mußte. Zu allem hatten wir Musik: Gitarren, Horn, Geige, Gesang. Es war zwar nicht so bequem, aber sicher 10 mal interessanter als in 2. Klasse." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 118.

- <sup>19</sup> "In Malta hatten wir 8 Stunden Aufenthalt, durften aber ohne besondere Erlaubnis des englischen Gouverneurs nicht an Land – als Deutsche, die Italiener durften ohne weiteres. Es ist das erste Mal, daß mir Deutschfeindlichkeit begegnet ist." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 118.
- <sup>20</sup> "In Italien und vor allem in Sizilien ist man gewöhnt als Deutscher besonders gut behandelt zu werden. In Sizilien wird man geradezu gefeiert. Die Franzosen sind verhaßt. Ich wurde oft an Finnland erinnert, nur daß der Sizilianer pazifistischer von Natur ist." (DBW 9: 118)
- <sup>21</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 20.
- <sup>22</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 19-20.
- <sup>23</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119.
- <sup>24</sup> Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, 181.
- <sup>25</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119.
- <sup>26</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 141-42.
- <sup>27</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119.
- <sup>28</sup> "Aber am meisten muß es einen hier doch entrüsten, wie sogar ein Volk mit einer so entwickelten Tradition und Kultur, wie die Araber es sind, zu Sklaven gemacht werden sollen. Wie man sieht, mit welcher Brutalität die italienischen Soldaten gegen diese vorgehen und sie wie gemeines Pack behandeln, versteht man deren Erbitterung, aber auch unmenschliche Angst." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 121. "Der Italiener, der in seinem ganzen Wesen so alles andre als Herrennatur ist, versucht nun in oft so dummer, taktloser und brutaler Weise, sich bei diesen herrschsüchtigen und trotzig Arabern in Achtung zu setzen, und das wirkt, ich glaube auch für den Araber, sehr lächerlich." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 125.
- <sup>29</sup> "Vor allem sind die Neger devot. Sie sind die unterste Schicht, auf die der Araber herabsieht." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119. "Die Neger sind hier teils Abessinier – die Soldaten mit oft sehr intelligenten Gesichtern und guten Gestalten, teils die wahnsinnig häßlichen aus dem Sudan Zugewanderten, die hier einfach als Vieh behandelt werden." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 121.
- <sup>30</sup> "Einen bettelnden Araber wird man kaum sehen, anders die Juden, die auch hier als kluges, geschäftstüchtiges Handelsvolk zwar sehr respektiert, aber doch als Leute, die sich auch mit dem Fremden abgeben, als eine Stufe niedriger angesehen werden." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 121.
- <sup>31</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 121.
- <sup>32</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119.
- <sup>33</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 47.
- <sup>34</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 59.
- <sup>35</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 59.
- <sup>36</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 59.
- <sup>37</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 121.
- <sup>38</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 22. Stein notes in this respect: "Dieser Kontrast zwischen bestialischen Gesichtszügen einerseits und einer vollkommenen Schönheit des übrigen Körpers und einer kolossalen Statur andererseits wird bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts das Bild des Negers kennzeichnen" Martin Steins, *Das Bild Des Schwarzen in der Europäischen Kolonialliteratur 1870-1918. Ein Beitrag Zur Literarischen Imagologie* (Frankfurt Am Main: Thesen Verlag, 1972), 94.
- <sup>39</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 22.
- <sup>40</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 121.
- <sup>41</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 22. Behdad illustrates how "Under Western eyes, the body is that which is most proper to the primitive, the sign by which the primitive is represented." Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 22.
- <sup>42</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119. This is further underlined by the way he describes the stark contrast to their experience of Italy: "Der Kontrast zwischen Italien und Afrika ist hier ganz ungeheuerlich. Daß ich nun gleich nach Italien, wo ich europäische Kultur so rein gesehen habe, die

morgenländische sehe, ist unbeschreiblich interessant. Ich weiß kaum, wie ich Euch schreiben soll; denn fast alles ist anders als bei uns." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 119.

<sup>43</sup> Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Post-Contemporary Interventions, ed. Stanley Fish and Frederic Jameson (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), 60.

<sup>44</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 60.

<sup>46</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 122.

<sup>47</sup> Steins, *Das Bild Des Schwarzen in der Europäischen Kolonialliteratur 1870-1918. Ein Beitrag Zur Literarischen Imagologie*, 104.

<sup>48</sup> "Etwas ganz Herrliches ist der südliche Nachthimmel; ... und die Sterne flimmern und zittern mit ganz strahlendem Licht. Die starke Beschäftigung mit dem Sternhimmel, die im Orient doch wesentlich ist, und die Furcht der Eingeborenen vor diesen Dämonen wird wirklich erst hier sehr verständlich." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 123.

<sup>49</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 123.

<sup>50</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 152.

<sup>51</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 99-100. Commenting on the particular political circumstances the editors note: "Tripolitanien, heute Teil von Libyen, wurde von den Italienern 1911/12 im Krieg mit der Türkei erobert. Das Hinterland konnte aber erst nach dem 1. Weltkrieg unterworfen werden; deshalb die von den Brüdern beobachtete starke militärische Präsenz. Sie befanden sich in kaum befriedetem Hinterland, was die nervöse Reaktion der Militärbehörden erklären mag." Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 100, footnote 65.

<sup>52</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21.

<sup>53</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 123.

<sup>54</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 123.

<sup>55</sup> This specific link to Bonhoeffer's thoughts on religionsless Christianity is further deepened when we discuss his ongoing interest in India. It can be shown that his attraction to the Old Testament performed a similar function to his desire to visit India.

<sup>56</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 123.

<sup>57</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 123-24.

<sup>58</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 167.

<sup>59</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 263.

<sup>60</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 263.

<sup>61</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 124.

<sup>62</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.

<sup>63</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 100.

<sup>64</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 100.

<sup>65</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 100.

<sup>66</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 101.

<sup>67</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 101.

<sup>68</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 101.

<sup>69</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 101.

<sup>70</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 24.

<sup>71</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 97.

<sup>72</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 94.

<sup>73</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 92.

<sup>74</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 92-93.

<sup>75</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 96.

<sup>76</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 98. Spurr notes how the absence of history is a theme in Hegel, "who find that Africa, having no political constitution, no movement or development to exhibit, is no historical part of the world: 'What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the world's History'." Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 98. "Hegel sees writing not just as historical record but as a condition of the possibility of history in the teleological sense: writing fixes reality and imparts consistency to laws, manners, customs, and deeds, thereby creating the objective self-image of a people necessary for the creation of new institutions. To be incapable of writing is to have no historical destiny." Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 98.

<sup>77</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 99.

<sup>78</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 99.

<sup>79</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 107.

<sup>80</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 107. Heidegger and Derrida are said to have interpreted the projected void in relation to death: "The terror of this void produces the fugitive authenticity that Heidegger ascribes to modern existence, a constant fleeing in the face of death. Derrida as well has written that the image, or the imagination, 'is at bottom the relationship with death' (...) – death as the abyss at the center of representation which is spanned by the structures of imagination in the most precarious way." Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 107.

<sup>81</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 94.

<sup>82</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 142. He refers to the irony of a disorienting Orient as employed by Steve Attridge. Attridge cites two alternatives to the familiar use of "Orient" as a proper noun: "In Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755), Orient appears as an adjective: 'Bright; shining; glittering; gaudy; sparkling.' The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1928) includes the following figurative use of Orient as a verb: 'to adjust, correct, or bring into defined relations, to known facts and principles. refl. to put oneself in the right position or relation; to ascertain one's >bearings,< find out >where one is.<' Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 142.

<sup>83</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 124.

<sup>84</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 263.

<sup>85</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 97.

<sup>86</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 26.

<sup>87</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 26.

<sup>88</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 26.

<sup>89</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 27.

<sup>90</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 29-30.

<sup>91</sup> Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 30.

<sup>92</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26.

<sup>93</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26-27.

<sup>94</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 27.

<sup>95</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

#### 4. Barcelona and German Diaspora Life

##### *Introduction*

Bonhoeffer's letters from Spain portray a person, "dem alle Welt – bis nach Indien – offenzustehen schien, und der wie alle Selbstzeugnisse belegen, eine ungewöhnlich intensive Lebensform entwickelte."<sup>1</sup> His year in Spain and in particular his vicariat at the German congregation in Barcelona not only encouraged him to explore the "differences in European cultures and national temperaments"<sup>2</sup>, but also offered him a first-hand experience of the idiosyncraties of German diaspora life<sup>3</sup>, an encounter with *Heimat* abroad. Hence, his trip to Spain exposed Bonhoeffer to two interwoven experiences of "Fremdheit". Spain itself represented "another Latin and Catholic country yet so different from Italy."<sup>4</sup> Embedded in the host country the diasporic community of expatriated Germans - a minority striving to preserve cultural cohesion and maintain identification with the original homeland - portrayed a German identity preserved and transformed in spite of pressures to assimilate. Furthermore the experience of leaving the comfortable and familiar setting of Berlin's academic university environment in order to plunge into the very different demands of local parish work amounted to a symbolic exile whose benefits had yet to be discovered. But, as Bethge highlights, from the beginning Bonhoeffer recognized the need to become fully part of the new context and its people's lives: "Bonhoeffer hatte Verständnis dafür, daß ein Mitleben und Eingehen auf die Leute sein Recht habe. So ließ er sich von dem Vikariatsvater ein ganzes Stück weit mitnehmen, um diese Wirklichkeit nicht zu verfehlen."<sup>5</sup> Empathy and living alongside people with the help of a cultural mediator, then, proved to be important factors in enabling "Wirklichkeitsnähe". Superintendent Max Diestel, who was one of Berlin's leading ecumenical voices and instrumental in getting Bonhoeffer to Barcelona, encouraged him along those lines when he wrote: "Nach meiner Auffassung sollte jeder Mensch einmal Gelegenheit nehmen, sich in ganz anderen Lebenskreisen zu bewegen, als die sind, in denen seine Erziehung und die Bildung seines geistigen Gesichts erfolgt ist."<sup>6</sup> He continues to stress the tremendous need for being exposed to a foreign reality, especially for theologians: "Der Fehler ist vielfach, namentlich bei uns Theologen, daß wir viel zu akademisch und viel zu weltfremd aufwachsen und dann auch die andersartig gerichtete Welt der Wirklichkeit mit kurzsichtigen Augen ansehen."<sup>7</sup>

Diestel's comment draws an important link between the theologians' difficulty of avoiding an existence in the ivory tower and, as a consequence, a short sighted view of the reality of other worlds. Bonhoeffer seems to suggest a similar connection when he confesses to having turned "zum Wirklichen" during his early journeys abroad. But how and when did Bonhoeffer's "Fremderfahrten" in Spain reflect such a turning? Each "Fremderfahrt" will be looked at in terms of Schöffter's four *modi* of encounters while taking into account the particular cultural dynamics determined by German diaspora life.

### *The German "Other"*

In his encounter with the German "other" Bonhoeffer showed great sensitivity towards the German community's "diasporist skills for maintaining difference in contact and accommodation."<sup>8</sup> Barcelona offered an important experience of difference which was not articulated by separation but by connection.<sup>9</sup> It suggested an understanding of difference in terms of "a process of continual renegotiation in new circumstances of dangerous and creative coexistence."<sup>10</sup> Such a process necessarily included "practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms."<sup>11</sup> These phenomena of cultural amalgamation and contestation illustrate what is also expressed with the concept of hybridity - also termed in-betweenness or liminality - which features as a prominent metaphor for complex and relational intercultural encounters and mixings.<sup>12</sup> Hybridity's emphasis on how in the process of negotiating difference and otherness identities are dialectically created highlights this important dynamic of constant negotiation underlying Schöffter's four "modi der Fremderfahrt". Bonhoeffer's travel writings show how diaspora German culture and identity appear to both embrace and resist hybridisation. Embrace of and resistance to hybridisation mirror an experience of "Fremdheit als Ergänzung" and "Fremdheit als Gegenbild". This ambivalence is at the heart of what Jaques Derrida described as the "promise/threat" of the form of association signified by the word "community". Engaging Derrida's insights on the notion of "community" Caputo points out that "while the word sounds like something warm and comforting, the very notion is built around a defense that a 'we' throws up against the 'other,' that is, it is built around an idea of *inhospitality*, an idea of *hostility* to the *hostis*, not around hospitality."<sup>13</sup> Hence, a "community" is understood to be subject to the aporia of



having to both exercise “self-limitation” and “openness” in order to establish a degree of harmony and peace: “If a community is too welcoming, it loses its identity; if it keeps its identity, it becomes unwelcoming.”<sup>14</sup> The experience of German diaspora life therefore challenged Bonhoeffer to work out his place as a tourist and guest within both the German and Spanish community and to negotiate his own practices of accomodation and resistance among two very different hosts.

Representing what Robin Cohen would classify as a “trade diaspora”<sup>15</sup>, the German merchants lived, traded and conversed in the process of maintaining a distinct community.<sup>16</sup> The image of the journey is seen to be at the heart of the notion of diaspora.<sup>17</sup> But “Paradoxically, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots ‘elsewhere’.”<sup>18</sup> Bonhoeffer’s travel accounts give us only a few glimpses of the specific history in which this community remains “rooted/routed”<sup>19</sup>. We don’t hear much about the “socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions” which mark the particular trajectory of their journey.<sup>20</sup> And yet, Bonhoeffer’s observations allow us to discern how “Diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots *and* routes to construct ... alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference.”<sup>21</sup> We are familiarized with the way “diaspora discourses represent experiences of displacement, of constructing homes away from home ...”<sup>22</sup> In this respect Cliffords leading questions are also relevant to our own analysis for they translate, as we will see, into Schäffter’s four “*modi der Fremderfahrung*”: “What experiences do they [diaspora discourses] reject, replace, or marginalize?”<sup>23</sup> What kind of “normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing”<sup>24</sup> do we recognize? At the same time we also need to ask ourselves: How did Bonhoeffer position himself in the midst of this process of continual renegotiation? We follow Brah in locating these negotiations in what he coins “diaspora space”.<sup>25</sup> It encapsulates “the intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes.”<sup>26</sup> It is the space “where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibility mingle even while these syncretic forms may be disclaimed in the name of purity and tradition.”<sup>27</sup>

Bonhoeffer's introduction to his new community began with a little curiosity. Already on the second day of his stay the hat he wore became the main attraction among some of the youngsters at the German school confronting him with an experience of his own strangerhood.<sup>28</sup> Bonhoeffer wrote to his mother about the incidence not without some amusement speculating on the possible advantages of such an introduction.<sup>29</sup> The experience with his hat becomes symbolic for the general phenomenon "einer wechselseitig, sich gegenseitig hervorrufenden Fremdheit" so important for an experience of genuine encounter and what Schäffter describes as an experience of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität".<sup>30</sup> Given Bonhoeffer's primal socialisation in Berlin's academic upper class, "the atmosphere of his [German] community of small business people was almost as new to him as the native Spanish."<sup>31</sup> It brought him into contact with a very different milieu from the "Grunewaldviertel" in Berlin. Bethge notes how "die Menschen, mit denen er es in seiner neuen Stellung zu tun bekam ... ihm ihrer Art nach fremd [waren]: kaufmännisch orientierte, kleinbürgerlich denkende Auslandsdeutsche."<sup>32</sup> The diaspora's dis-connectedness from "home" and, as a consequence, its missing out on the events after the war are seen to be of great significance. Berlin's experimental exuberance and busyness are contrasted with the diaspora's concern with the conservation of traditional values and thought patterns.<sup>33</sup> Hence, the experiences of "wechselseitiger Fremdheit" are based on striking differences of socio-political background illustrating the "distancing" effects of living in the diaspora. The conservative outlook of the German community is far removed from Berlin's progressive and fast-moving metropolitan life style. But it is not only characterized by a certain "backwardness". Its historic roots as a trade diaspora have also left a unique mark on the community's composition confusing Bonhoeffer's familiar categories of class and status and leaving him with a sense of dis-orientation and a puzzling "Grenzerfahrung" characteristic of "Fremderfahrung als Komplementarität".<sup>34</sup> This is illustrated in a letter to his grandmother in which he expresses difficulty in grouping the people he meets, indicating his need to introduce a whole new social class.<sup>35</sup>

At the beginning, though, the German community seemed to provide no more than an experience of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild" representing what Bonhoeffer described as "Kleinstadt mit viel Geld!"<sup>36</sup> Bonhoeffer's first impressions conveyed an image of

“Wohlstand und hochgeschraubter Geselligkeit”<sup>37</sup>. Writing to his mother he muses specifically about the rather unusual topics that fill daily conversations and reflect a certain decadence.<sup>38</sup> Bonhoeffer’s judgement of the people was hence initially rather harsh: “Denn stumpfsinnig sind die Menschen hier weitgehendst wirklich über die Maßen, die Alten wie die Jungen – das heißt eben in allen anderen Dingen außer in ihrem Geschäft.”<sup>39</sup> But in the course of time Bonhoeffer gained a more comprehensive and authentic perspective of the community’s situation. He observed the tremendous economical strain an increasing number of the community’s members were suffering. In one case, as Bethge records, Bonhoeffer even had to deal with the suicide of one of the community’s longstanding and renowned merchants.<sup>40</sup> These experiences must have helped Bonhoeffer to discover a whole new aspect of diaspora life and to overcome his initial prejudice. It represented a learning process which took him beyond the category of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” towards another genuine “Grenzerfahrung”.

In a letter to his brother Karl-Friedrich Bonhoeffer again expressed great concern about the harsh socio-economic circumstances that cause growing poverty and unemployment, causing some traders to attempt to re-settle in Germany.<sup>41</sup> It is in this respect that the “subtext of ‘home’”<sup>42</sup> embodied in the concept of diaspora surfaced raising the difficult question of “Where is home?” Brah explains how “‘home’ is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination.”<sup>43</sup> As the place of “origin” it is projected as a place of refuge and safety, even though the actual reality, as Bonhoeffer comments to his brother, might be very different: “Dauernd haben wir mit Heimschaffungen von Deutschen zu tun und wissen doch, daß es zu Haus auch nicht besser ist.”<sup>44</sup> This problematic of “home” and belonging is perceived to be an integral part of the diasporic condition, placing “the discourse of ‘home’ and ‘dispersion’ in creative tension, *inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins.*”<sup>45</sup> The difficult economic situation inscribed this “homing desire” through a wish to return to their place of “origin” imagined as a place of refuge and safety. As “Grenzgänger”, being both in- and outsider, Bonhoeffer was able to see the lack of “Wirklichkeitsnähe” of their hopes.

It should therefore not surprise us that some of Bonhoeffer’s sermons convey a pastoral response to diaspora cultures and their function of mediating “in a lived

tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place.”<sup>46</sup> Bonhoeffer tried to accommodate the congregation’s homing desire by transcending it through a range of biblical images and illustrations.<sup>47</sup> The images of paradise as “verlorene(n) Heimat”<sup>48</sup>, of God’s people as “ein Volk, das auf der Wanderschaft ist zu seiner Heimat, die in weiter Ferne herrlich schimmert”<sup>49</sup>, and the equation of “*Sehnsucht nach dem Ursprung, nach der Heimat, nach Gott*”<sup>50</sup> represent an attempt to project the diasporic questions of “roots and routes” onto one’s faith in God. Bonhoeffer’s intention was summed up in his reference to Augustine’s dictum “Du hast uns zu dir hin geschaffen, und *unruhig* ist unser Herz in uns, bis es Ruhe findet in dir.”<sup>51</sup> And the waiting and longing inherent to the season of Advent, for example, is explained as “etwas wie Heimweh nach vergangenen Zeiten, fernen Orten, und doch so ein seliges Heimweh ohne Härte, ohne Verbissenheit ...”<sup>52</sup> It is a longing which is said to take one “weiter als in vergangene Jahre, als ins Elternhaus, ja nach der Heimat jenseits der Wolken, hin zu einem ewigen Vaterhaus.”<sup>53</sup> The church’s self-understanding is hence portrayed as “[eine] Pilgerschaft durch die Welt ...”<sup>54</sup>

And yet, it is a journey which is not only nurtured by expectations for the heavenly home, but is also seen to share a sense of homelessness as the basic *conditio humana*: “Es legt sich etwas auf uns von dem Fluch der Heimatlosigkeit, der auf der Welt lastet, des ewigen Wandernmüssens ohne Ziel und Ende.”<sup>55</sup> It is the common fate of Cain which is seen to turn each human being into a desperate traveller: “Als Fremdling, ja mehr noch: als Vertriebener und Abgefallener geht der Mensch durch die Welt Gottes, er sieht gleichsam das Paradies vor sich liegen und ist doch ausgetrieben, kann seine Seligkeit nicht genießen, er trägt ein Kainszeichen auf der Stirn, das Zeichen des Menschseins, das heißt das Zeichen der Friedlosigkeit.”<sup>56</sup> Employing another illustration in order to portray the tragedy of the human condition Bonhoeffer argues: “Die ganze Menschheit gleicht dem Juden Ahasverus, der nach der alten Sage Gottes gelästert hat und nun in ewiger Wanderschaft ohne Heimat, ohne Rast, in ewiger Friedlosigkeit sein Leben dahinbringen muß.”<sup>57</sup> Bonhoeffer’s reflections offer a theological interpretation of Brah’s concept of diaspora space which references “the global condition of ‘culture as a site of travel’.” Implied is a theological critique of the essentialist quest for fixed origins and projects which according to Bonhoeffer need to be translated into a “homing desire” for God.

Thereby both “Ursprung” and “Heimat” are placed within eschatological brackets. Bonhoeffer’s final sermon in Barcelona ends with suggesting the “Wandern” as “Sinnbild für unser ganzes Leben ...” In saying farewell to the congregation he quotes what he admits to be his favorite verse: “‘Ein Tag, der sagt dem andern, mein Leben sei ein Wandern zur großen Ewigkeit.’”<sup>58</sup> It is hence at the moment of his imminent departure that Bonhoeffer conflates the literal and symbolic meaning of the word “Wanderung ...” It places his own journeys within that Christian pilgrimage “zur großen Ewigkeit ...”

Finding a home away from home became a major challenge for Bonhoeffer himself. It is Berlin’s academic environment he yearns for most. In a letter to Reinhold Seeberg Bonhoeffer laments about how much he misses the scholarly exchange of University seminars. Being thrown back upon himself he suffers the solitude of what he calls “wissenschaftliche[s] Einsiedlertum ...”<sup>59</sup> It is an experience of intellectual exile which makes him realize, “daß erst aus der lebendigen Berührung mit anderen Geistern man selbst zur Gestaltung und Fassung dessen geführt wird, was man zu eigen hat.”<sup>60</sup> Yet, in the same breath he concedes that such isolation also encourages growth beyond doctrinal knowledge acquired.<sup>61</sup> In fact, he appreciates the new exposure to people with a very different background as a healthy “Fremderfahrung” for the academic minded: “Es ist ganz gewiß gut, sich rechtzeitig die Hörner abzulaufen, besonders auch bezüglich der Wissenschaft und ebensogut einmal auf Leute hingewiesen zu sein, die einem in Interessenkreis und Lebensanschauung so fremd sind wie nur möglich.”<sup>62</sup> His letter to Adolf von Harnack therefore underlines the positive experience of practical work. He especially appreciates the ability to recognize the limits of the value of pure scholarship: “Man gewinnt Abstand von so manchem, in das man sich verannt hatte, man wird freier von schulmäßigen Doktrinen und man lernt die Grenzen des Wertes der reinen Wissenschaft doch auch bedeutend schärfer sehen ...”<sup>63</sup> Diaspora Barcelona thus provided Bonhoeffer with an important “Grenzerfahrung”, facilitated by his pastoral encounter with the German “other” which made him question the absolute status given to scholarship within the realm of academia and enabled a new sense of “Wirklichkeitsnähe”.<sup>64</sup>

Apart from valuing these practical experiences Bonhoeffer also comments positively on how little impact the war and the time of revolution had made on the Diaspora

community, in contrast to the impact on Germany. It is said to have created a much more relaxed and natural atmosphere: "Es fehlt all die Nervosität und Überspanntheit, alle intellektualistische Affektiertheit und Manieriertheit, wie wir sie in Deutschland so reichlich genießen und wie sie schon zum guten Ton gehört."<sup>65</sup> "Anständigkeit, Ehrlichkeit, Einfachheit, nichts aus sich machen"<sup>66</sup> are the character traits he is most impressed by. They provoked an experience of "Fremdheit als Ergänzung" which disclosed serious flaws in the make-up of the Germans back home.<sup>67</sup> The origin for this lack of conceit and arrogance found in the German diaspora community is traced back to the positive influence of the Spaniard: "der Spanier lacht über keinen Menschen so, als über den Aufgeblasenen und den Poseur ..."<sup>68</sup> Bonhoeffer's observations recognize a difference and transformation that is seen to originate in this combination of cultures pointing to a process of hybridisation. In turn, discussing with the Spanish the strengths and weaknesses of Germans in general, Bonhoeffer recognizes "daß ihnen [den Spaniern] das, was wir Pose nennen, fremd sei."<sup>69</sup> Reflecting on this construction of "Germanness" abroad Bonhoeffer expresses a sense of alienation and concludes: "Ich glaube, daß wir dadurch viel im Ausland verscherzt haben."<sup>70</sup> His self-critical note hence identifies the perception of German self-importance as a stumbling block for cross-cultural relationships.

The busyness of Berlin's academic and cultural programme was replaced by the membership in several of the German community's clubs: "des Deutschen Klubs, wo er aber vorsichtshalber nicht gleich den ersten Maskenball besuchte; des deutschen Tennisclub, wo er regelmäßig spielte; und des deutschen Gesangvereins, wo er sich tapfer der Klavierbegleitung zu allen Sentimentalitäten unterzog."<sup>71</sup> His main involvement, of course, centered around the encounter with diaspora parish life<sup>72</sup>: visiting parishioners, preparing services, joining local choral or gymnastic societies, attending committee meetings and being available for consultations in the German colony.<sup>73</sup> Commenting on one of his pastoral visitations Bonhoeffer discloses: "Bei letzterem war es recht gemütlich, nur daß die Unterhaltungen völlig anders verlaufen, als man es bei uns gewohnt ist. Ich habe seit ich hier bin noch keine Unterhaltung im Stile Berlin-Grunewald geführt."<sup>74</sup> Bethge accentuates the clash of expectations Bonhoeffer's family background and youthful ambition generated: "Der aristokratisch-bürgerliche Sohn der Wangenheimstraße mit seinen Ansprüchen an Leistung und Geschmack, mit dem Bedürfnis nach der Übereinstimmung von Haltung

und sprachlichem Ausdruck, er war nun auf den machmal so pseudoernsten, schnell zufriedengestellten Kreis der Kirchengemeinde angewiesen.”<sup>75</sup>

His frustration aired itself in the second lecture of his 1928/29 winter series that deals with “Jesus Christus und vom Wesen des Christentums.”<sup>76</sup> His comments express continuity with thoughts already raised during his stay in North Africa. For he questions the kind of “provincialism” Christ’s teaching has taken on, which was to become Bonhoeffer’s most prominent idea in *Widerstand und Ergebung*.<sup>77</sup> It was in Tripolis that he had experienced a unity of daily life and religion which he missed in European Christianity with its privatization and compartmentalization. God’s claim on the whole of reality is seen to be betrayed, creating a radical lack of “Wirklichkeitsnähe”. His experience of the church’s role in a diaspora community must have raised this issue with a new urgency. For, as was already mentioned above, the diaspora church had its appointed place among the many other social /activities like sports, dancing, and singing in the choir. Unfolding this particular symbiosis Bonhoeffer critically observes: “Die Situation ist im allgemeinen die, daß man der Kirche positiv gegenübersteht – man zahlt seine Beiträge – daß dem aber die aktive Bestätigung und Beteiligung nicht entfernt entspricht.”<sup>78</sup> As a consequence he detects “Viel Geschäft, viel Klatsch, viel ‘Moralin’, ein wenig Literatur und schließlich noch ein Klecks Kirchlichkeit ...”<sup>79</sup>

Bonhoeffer was determined to move Christ back into the center, saving him from being a mere addendum or “decoration” of life.<sup>80</sup> From the beginning he showed great ambition in shaping the church’s ministry and was prepared to take risks. It was, as Staats points out, “die praktische Probe auf das in seinem Erstlingswerk ‘Sanctorum Communio’ vorgelegte theoretische Exemple.”<sup>81</sup> One of Bonhoeffer’s central sermon themes was the mystery of the incarnation which prepares an understanding of Christ in the church “als dem begrenzenden und fordernden Du ...”<sup>82</sup> Contrasting Protestantism’s poor understanding of the church with the exuberance of Catholic ecclesiology Bonhoeffer re-visits his discussions of *Sanctorum Communio* by introducing the church “als den Ort, an dem einem die Gnade der gegenseitigen Hingabe, des Eintretens füreinander in der Fürbitte und die persönliche Beichte wiederfährt.”<sup>83</sup> But his teaching on social and ethical transcendence moves beyond the sphere of the church introducing Christ as the one who encounters us in every human

being we meet: "Aus jedem Menschen spricht uns Jesus Christus, Gott selbst an, der andere Mensch, dieses rätselhafte, undurchdringliche Du, es ist uns Anspruch Gottes, es ist uns der heilige Gott selbst, der uns begegnet."<sup>84</sup>

Bonhoeffer's concern for a genuine encounter with God includes the question of how to enable a powerful encounter with the biblical stories. He discloses to Rössler: "Ich habe gemerkt, daß die Predigten die wirkungskräftigsten waren, in denen ich verlockend, wie Kindern ein Märchen vom fremden Land, vom Evangelium erzählt habe."<sup>85</sup> Bonhoeffer's comment suggests a style of preaching which aims at disrupting the familiarity of the biblical stories. The attention of the audience is sought by giving prominence to the foreignness and otherness of the stories and thereby enabling a genuine "Grenzerfahrung". At the same time it is a homiletic approach which builds on the curiosity and fascination sparked off by the discovery of a far away country. Interestingly Bonhoeffer's use of the term "verlockend" resonates with the colonial rhetoric of desire and transgression so prominent in many travel writings.<sup>86</sup> It is in a sermon on Matthew 28:20<sup>87</sup> that Bonhoeffer's concern with encounter and genuine otherness come together in stories that depict God as the alien traveller: "Märchen und Legenden aus uralter Zeit erzählen von den Tagen, in denen Gott unter den Menschen einherging; das waren herrliche Zeiten als man auf der Straße einem Wanderer begegnete, der um Herberge bat und man zu Haus in diesem einfachen Mann Gott den Herrn selbst erkannte und nun reichlich Belohnung empfing ..."<sup>88</sup> And it is due to the promise that Jesus is with us at every step we take that we are called "die Augen aufzuhalten, wo wir ihn sehen – wie es für jene Menschen der Legende galt in dem fremden Wanderer Gott den Herrn zu erkennen."<sup>89</sup>

Bonhoeffer showed a special interest in working with children and young people. Quickly he managed to build up a regular and well attended children's service.<sup>90</sup> His particular focus on ministering to the children raised important questions on preaching in general and inspired him to explore the theme of the child in theology in greater depths.<sup>91</sup> He also paid special attention to the young people in his congregation, helped with the confirmation class and towards the end of his stay organized regular discussion evenings on religious subjects.<sup>92</sup> Again he was struck by the different mentality and socialisation among the young people that was due to their particular context. His initial diary notes reflect his first impressions and are rather negative.



Their lack of exposure to the war and the revolution are seen to have generated a comfortable shallow-mindedness.<sup>93</sup> Interestingly, towards the end of his stay, his assessment of the youth is more nuanced and positive moving from an experience of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild" to one of "Fremdheit als Ergänzung". Once again it is the positive Spanish influence which is credited with some of the virtues: "Geistige Blasiertheit oder auch nur Aufgeblasenheit gibt es kaum. Intelligenz wird jedenfalls nicht überschätzt. Man hat den Eindruck einer größeren Ehrlichkeit und Klarheit, was von dem spanischen Einfluß kommen mag."<sup>94</sup>

His room became an important meeting point involving him on several occasions in some form of mediation: "Er wußte Schulaffären in Ordnung zu bringen, ungenügende Leistungen aufzubessern und verärgerte Lehrer für ein nachsichtigeres Urteil über ihre Zöglinge zu gewinnen."<sup>95</sup> Bonhoeffer's involvement and generosity created a special bond with the youngsters: "Einem der Jungen schenkte er ein Fahrrad, einem anderen ein Klepperzelt. Die Schüler bereiteten dem Vikar ein festliches Weihnachten, das er zum ersten Mal fern von den Seinen begehen mußte."<sup>96</sup> But his popularity reached beyond the younger constituency of his congregation.<sup>97</sup> This was partly due to his ability to respect and accommodate the formation and interest of a diaspora community, to whom church traditions and Germany's classical legacy continued to be an important identity marker. It provided Bonhoeffer with an experience of "deutsche evangelische Volkskirchlichkeit" representative of most German churches abroad.<sup>98</sup> Bonhoeffer's sermons and lectures "mit ihren kenntnisreichen und gefühlvollen Anleihen an das klassische deutsche Bildungsgut" must therefore, as Staats points out, to be read in the light of this particular context.<sup>99</sup>

But Barcelona also represented the realization of a deep-seated and growing longing to leave Berlin's privileged circles behind and test his staying power: "Damit schien sich die Verwirklichung eines Wunsches, der sich bei mir in den letzten Jahren und Monaten immer verstärkt hatte, nämlich einmal auf längere Zeit ganz hinaus aus meinem bisherigen Bekanntenkreis völlig auf eigenen Füßen zu stehen zu kommen, anzubahnen."<sup>100</sup> One would have to agree with Bethge, though, that Bonhoeffer's stay in Spain did not yet involve the sacrifice of his privileged position he critically commented on as a student: "Ich möchte einmal ungeborgen sein. Wir können die anderen nicht verstehen. Bei uns sind immer die Eltern da, die alle Schwierigkeiten

erleichtern. Und ob wir auch noch so weit weg sind, gibt uns das eine so unverschämte Sicherheit."<sup>101</sup> His desire for an experience of being "ungeborgen" resonates with what we referred to as the "Barfußmethode" and recognizes the need for an experience from below in order to achieve genuine empathy and solidarity. And yet, he did not hesitate to make use of his privileged position and to draw on the help of his parents to deal with cases of emergency among his congregants.<sup>102</sup> From early on, then, Bonhoeffer seemed to have been alarmed by the difficulty of coming close to and understanding the destitute "other" while enjoying a position of power and security.<sup>103</sup> It continued to be a concern even during his imprisonment<sup>104</sup> and represented another aspect of his longing for "Wirklichkeitsnähe" constituted by a genuine "Grenzerfahrung". The dilemma of wanting to and yet so often not managing to understand the destitute "other" became an important dimension of his pastoral work in Barcelona. Initially though the dilemma was mainly in knowing if he could trust the personal account of people's life stories, since most visitors to the pastorate came because of its function as "Auskunfts- und Kassierstelle eines Hilfsvereins für verarmte und bedürftige Deutsche in Spanien."<sup>105</sup> Bonhoeffer complains about the difficulty of finding out if his visitor truly qualifies for financial assistance: "Dabei ist es für mich sehr schwer den Leuten anzusehen, wieviel von den Schauergeschichten, die sie erzählen völlig erlogen, übertrieben oder wahr ist."<sup>106</sup> It was not surprising, then, that in a letter to his parents Bonhoeffer requests a copy of the book *Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis des großstädtischen Bettel- und Vagabundentums* his father had published 1900.<sup>107</sup>

In a letter to his brother Karl-Friedrich, Bonhoeffer describes the people seeking help at the "Hilfsverein" as coming from the most diverse and unusual walks of life. He marvels about how these encounters provided him with the opportunity of meeting people he would have otherwise never spoken a word with: "Weltenbummler, Vagabunden, geflüchtete Verbrecher, viel Fremdenlegionäre, Löwen-und sonstige Tierbändiger, die dem Circus Krone auf seiner Spanienreise durchgebrannt sind, deutsche Tänzerinnen auf hiesigen Varietébühnen, deutsche verfolgte Fememörder, die einem nun alle ihr Lebensschicksal bis ins Detail berichten ..." <sup>108</sup> It is, therefore, not only the question of truth that these encounters triggered off. Their stories of displacement also provided him with various "Grenzerfahrungen" by taking him into alien and unfamiliar life worlds. Listening to their accounts Bonhoeffer noticed a

sincerity and authenticity that he often missed in Christian circles. It was the discovery of “real human beings” which struck him: “Leute mit Leidenschaften, Verbrechertypen, kleine Leute mit kleinen Zielen, kleinen Trieben und kleinen Verbrechen, - alles in allem Leute, die sich heimatlos fühlen in beiderlei Sinn, die auftauchen, wenn man freundlich mit ihnen redet, - wirkliche Menschen ...”<sup>109</sup>

Bonhoeffer employs their idealization<sup>110</sup> to launch a sharp critique of what he perceives to be a Christian world distorted by hypocrisy and masquerade. The “other” becomes an ethical absolute for a particular quality of realness. It represents an experience of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” whereby the “other” is made “zum positiven Gegensatz einer *negativ* erlebten Eigenheit ...”<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, in an attempt to capture the particular character of those seeking support at the “Hilfsverein”, Bonhoeffer classifies their condition as “heimatlos” – in a literal and metaphorical sense. “Heimatlos” here signifies a state of rootlessness, of no sense of belonging or feeling at home. And it includes the impossibility of returning to a place one would be able to call “home”. And yet, surprisingly, these encounters are perceived to contest the diaspora community’s “boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of ‘us’ and ‘them’”. For the encounters made with these “outsiders” suggest to him, “daß gerade diese viel eher unter der Gnade als unter Zorn, daß aber gerade die christliche Welt viel eher unter dem Zorn als unter der Gnade steht.”<sup>112</sup> Notions of center and periphery as inscribed in the Christian institution of the church are questioned and subverted. It is a reversal which is part of the process of idealization and is described by Schäffter in a way which resonates especially with traditional church politics: “Gerät die ‘Eigenheit’ über fortschreitende Prozesse der Ausgrenzung und Abspaltung zu immer höherer ‘Reinheit’ und ‘Perfektion’ in eine Stagnation ihrer Entwicklung, so kann der Komplex des Verdrängten und Ausgegrenzten die Bedeutung einer positiven Alternative erhalten.”<sup>113</sup> This is seen to explain the “*utopische[n] Charakter des Fremden* als Negation einer reduzierten und einseitig verfestigten Eigenheit.”<sup>114</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s comments are reminiscent of his travel stop in Paris on the way to Spain, for his visit to Sacré-Coeur inspired a similar reflection exceeding a rhetoric of idealisation and introducing us to what Spurr described as the aestheticization of social reality.<sup>115</sup> For during this visit Bonhoeffer exhibited the “passive” role of a

mere observer creating a distance which made him more susceptible to an aesthetic treatment of the scene: "Fast ausschließlich Montmartreleute in der Kirche, Dirnen und die dazugehörigen Männer gingen zur Messe, beugten sich allen Zeremonien; es war das ein ungeheuer eindrucksvolles Bild und man sah wieder einmal ganz deutlich, wie nah im Grunde grade diese durch Schicksal und Schuld am schwersten Belasteten der Sache des Evangeliums stehen."<sup>116</sup> He continues: "Ich kann mir einen betenden Mörder, eine betende Dirne viel eher vorstellen als einen eitlen Menschen im Gebet. Nichts ist dem Gebet so zuwider, wie die Eitelkeit."<sup>117</sup> Both accounts, emerging from his experiences at the "Hilfsverein" and his visit to Sacré-Coeur, portray a longing for authenticity that would reverse conventional notions of center and periphery. The idea of such a reversal corresponded with Bonhoeffer's critique of the way the German diaspora community had found a comfortable *modus operandi* with the church.

Bonhoeffer's personal desire "völlig auf eigenen Füßen zu stehen zu kommen" in order to better understand those less privileged corresponds with the way he sketches the European crisis in his 1928/29 winter lecture series in Barcelona with the title: "Not und Hoffnung in der religiösen Lage der Gegenwart"<sup>118</sup> The crisis is portrayed as a pressing uncertainty pertaining to political, educational, ethical and religious questions.<sup>119</sup> The foundations are shaken and require a critical investigation: "Es ist uns einmal rücksichtslos der Boden unter den Füßen weggezogen worden – sagen wir besser das bürgerliche Parkett, - und nun heißt's sich selbst den Flecken *Erde* zu suchen, auf dem man stehen will."<sup>120</sup> To illustrate the seriousness of the situation Bonhoeffer paints a dramatic scene: "Wir haben Schiffbruch in vollstem Umfang und nun ist es das Erschütternde zu sehen, wie haltlos ein großer Teil von uns geworden ist. ... Nur wenige sind's, die sich durchgekämpft haben zu einem Stückem festen Land, auf dem sie Fuß fassen und von dem aus sie Rettungsarbeit tun können."<sup>121</sup> Bonhoeffer's choice of imagery is striking. Europe is envisioned as shipwrecked and desperately in search of a piece of land from which to begin its rescue operations. The metaphor of "Fuß fassen auf einem Stückem festen Land" was a familiar and important one in the political ethics of German liberalism and functioned as "ein Leitbild, das warnen sollte, 'einen Standort *außerhalb* der Welt' einzunehmen."<sup>122</sup> Bonhoeffer employed it as a basic ethical image in order to emphasize the need to engage the contemporary world and its crisis with empathy and solidarity: "wir sollen

soviel Liebe zu dieser unsrer Gegenwart, zu diesem unserem Geschlecht haben, daß wir uns mit ihm solidarisch erklären, in der Not wie in der Hoffnung.”<sup>123</sup> His earnest plea must once again be read as a concern for “Wirklichkeitnähe” bringing together personal and political motives, providing us with another dimension of his turning to the real.

As we have seen, according to Bonhoeffer the solution to this crisis had to be guided by a renewed commitment to this earth. But this had to include a trans-continental process which would involve different cultures and traditions: “Kein Einzelner wird Antwort finden – ein gewaltiger allgemeiner menschlicher asiatisch-europäisch-amerikanischer Prozeß muß hier zur Beantwortung dieser Fragen führen ...”<sup>124</sup> It exemplified the kind of openness to the world which he had in mind in saying that his theology was becoming “humanistisch”. And yet, while envisioning such a common project, to Bonhoeffer the quest for an answer would have to be located within one’s own particular tradition for he continues : “und doch wird jeder für sich und die anderen Antwort suchen.”<sup>125</sup> It was a commitment to this world, then, which would counter destructive forms of nationalism and provincialism, recognizing the need for both internationalism and particularity for the sake of genuine otherness.<sup>126</sup> This came out most clearly in Bonhoeffer’s first lecture on “Not und Hoffnung in der religiösen Lage der Gegenwart. Die Tragödie des Prophetentums und ihr bleibender Sinn”<sup>127</sup>. Bonhoeffer’s analysis provides an encounter with Israel’s prophets, in which he emphatically identifies with the struggles of their calling and with how they have to witness to the universal God destroying Israel’s nationalism.<sup>128</sup>

Hand in hand with this questioning of nationalistic aspirations went a radical critique of idealism’s hold on history by pressing history into a system of ideas and allowing no newness of thought or event.<sup>129</sup> For it not only erases particularity but also implies that history cannot make any claims on human beings. Bonhoeffer therefore argues for the need to be open to the kind of claims history makes on one’s life: “Man verfügt nicht von vornherein über das, was einem die Geschichte sagen kann, sondern man läßt der Geschichte ihren Anspruch an uns selbst, man läßt sich seine eigenen Begriffe nötigenfalls zerbrechen, weil die Geschichte mehr ist als die Idee.”<sup>130</sup> Such a genuine encounter with history happens when people allow the New Testament to

speak and hear God's claim made upon their lives through Jesus Christ.<sup>131</sup> The encounter envisioned implies an experience of "Fremdheit" in terms of a radical "Grenzerfahrung" whereby people are bound to be only "Hörende" and "Empfangende".<sup>132</sup> Bonhoeffer hereby rejects the high esteem for civilization/culture found in humanism, mysticism, and Protestantism. His critique questions humanism's belief in "das Göttliche im Menschen, ... die unbegrenzten Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten des menschlichen Geistes überhaupt und ... einen Fortschritt der Geschichte auf Gott hin."<sup>133</sup> Christianity, in contrast, is said to be neither "kulturselig" nor "fortschrittsgläubig".<sup>134</sup> The reason given is a profound experience of reality inherent to Christian belief: "Zu tief hat es [das Christentum] in die beiden tiefsten Wirklichkeiten des Lebens geschaut, der Schauer vor Tod und vor Schuld hat es mächtig gepackt. Zu furchtbar ist der Ernst des Sterbenmüssens und des eine Schuld-tragen-müssens, d.h. das allgemein menschliche Schicksal, als daß wir vom menschlichen Werk die Lösung dieser Not erhoffen dürfen."<sup>135</sup> Bonhoeffer's concern for "Wirklichkeitsnähe" hence implied a faithfulness to the earth which included an emphasis on internationalism, particularity and history. They were mediated by a fresh encounter with the New Testament and a radical critique of idealism's "phraseology".

It is also in his sermons that Bonhoeffer balances the theme of the Christian pilgrimage with a strong emphasis on the ethical challenge of remaining faithful to the earth. In a sermon on Romans 12:11 Bonhoeffer describes the Christian as "Gegenwartsmensch" in the sense that he is willing to share "sei es die *politische*, die *wirtschaftliche* Not, sei es der *moralische* und *religiöse* Verfall, sei es die Sorge um unsere heranwachsende Jugend ...".<sup>136</sup> It is in the same sermon that he encourages people to learn the meaning of human solidarity, which includes the sharing of "die Verantwortung für Schuld und Elend von uns allen ...".<sup>137</sup> It is followed by an appeal to be "Erdenkinder" in every sense of the word, which is reminiscent of his admiration of the "wirklichen Menschen" he encountered through his work at the "Hilfsverein": "Gott will Menschen sehen, nicht Gespenster, die den Erdboden scheuen, Gott hat die Erde geliebt und hat uns aus der Erde gemacht, er hat die Erde zu unsere Mutter gemacht, Er, der unser Vater ist."<sup>138</sup> It includes the acknowledgement that we are created "als Erdenkinder mit Schuld und Leidenschaft, mit Kraft und Schwächen ...".<sup>139</sup> But as such we are "gottgeliebte Erdenkinder, von

Gott geliebt, gerade in unserer Schwäche, in unseren Leidenschaften, in unserer Schuld ...”<sup>140</sup> To further illustrate and deepen the need to be firmly rooted in this world Bonhoeffer draws on the popular Greek myth of the invincible giant Antäus: “Viele hatten den Kampf versucht und waren unterlegen, bis einer kam, der im Kampf den Riesen vom Erdboden aufhob und da auf einmal war es um ihn geschehen, seine Kraft war gewichen, die ihm nur dadurch zufließte, daß er mit festen Füßen auf dem Erdboden stand.”<sup>141</sup> To Bonhoeffer the story of the giant Antäus illustrates well the Christian calling to be faithful to this earth: “Nur der, der mit beiden Füßen sich auf die Erde stellt, der ganz Erdenkind ist und bleibt, der nicht hoffnungslose Flugversuche unternimmt zu Höhen, die ihm doch unerreichbar sind, der sich bescheidet mit dem, was er hat und dankbar daran festhält, der hat die volle Kraft des Menschentums, der dient der Zeit, und damit der Ewigkeit.”<sup>142</sup>

Commitment and faithfulness to this earth, according to Bonhoeffer, included a Christian ethic which would take into account its historical and contextual nature. Hence shortly before his departure from Barcelona Bonhoeffer gave his third address on “Grundfragen einer christlichen Ethik.”<sup>143</sup> Bonhoeffer begins with rejecting an understanding of ethics as a system of general principles, which could be applied universally. The limitation of the lecture to basic questions of Christian ethics is explained in view of the assumption “daß es christliche Normen und Prinzipien sittlicher Art nicht gibt und nie geben kann, daß es vielmehr die Begriffe ‘gut’ und ‘böse’ nur im Vollzug einer Handlung, d.h. aber in der jeweiligen Gegenwart gibt, daß mithin jeder Versuch, Prinzipien darzulegen, dem Versuch gliche den Vogel im Fluge zu zeichnen.”<sup>144</sup> In stressing the contextual nature of ethical statements<sup>145</sup> he then concludes: “Es gibt Ethos nur in den Banden der Geschichte, in der konkreten Situation, im Augenblick des göttlichen Anrufs, des Angesprochenenseins, des Anspruchs durch die konkrete Not und Entscheidungslage, des Anspruchs, dem ich zu antworten, mich zu verantworten habe.”<sup>146</sup>

In discussing the problems of formulating a specifically Christian ethic Bonhoeffer first of all maintains: “Die Frage des Christentums ist nicht die Frage nach Gut und Böse beim Menschen, sondern die, ob Gott gnädig sein will oder nicht.”<sup>147</sup> This, of course, poses the difficult question of how to interpret the ethical teachings of the New Testament. Bonhoeffer’s analysis carefully argues that the sum of Jesus’ ethical

commandments are not in any way proposing a new ethical principle. Instead the “newness” of thought emerging from the Gospel is characterised as follows: “Es gibt für den Christen keine ethischen Prinzipien, anhand derer er sich etwa versittlichen könnte. Es gibt immer nur den entscheidenden Augenblick, und zwar jeden Augenblick, der ethisch wertvoll werden kann.”<sup>148</sup> And it is in this sense that the precious good of freedom is perceived to be returned to humankind: “Indem Jesus den Menschen unmittelbar Gott unterstellt, in jedem Augenblick neu und anders, gibt er der Menschheit das gewaltigste Geschenk wieder, das sie verloren hatte, die Freiheit.”<sup>149</sup> This gift of freedom is perceived to imply creative agency in the process of forming new laws and commandments.<sup>150</sup> One’s ethical choices should therefore never be determined by absolute principles. The loneliness this situation creates awakens the “I” to the call and claim of God.<sup>151</sup> This radical emphasis of what Bethge coined “[eine] titanische(n) Augenblicksethik”<sup>152</sup> in combination with his teaching on being faithful to the earth misled Bonhoeffer to argue “das relative Recht des Stärkeren im Wirtschafts- und im Lebenskampf der Nationen. Lieber dies, als eine falsche Weltflucht! Lieber dies, als Nietzsche die Erde überlassen!”<sup>153</sup> It was a dangerous nationalistic logic, a worship of power that resonated with an ideology of superiority and was employed to justify colonial conquest.<sup>154</sup> For colonial discourse used to naturalize the process of domination in the sense that “nature, or ‘natural law,’ is also that which grants dominion over the earth to more advanced people; the land shall belong by natural right to that power which understands its value and is willing to turn it to account.”<sup>155</sup>

In certain parts his presentation identified with what Staats refers to as the “neulutherischen religiösen Aufwertung des Volksgedankens”<sup>156</sup>. His justification of war represented the “Volkstumstheologie” which was widely shared in German Protestantism between the two World Wars and made it very vulnerable to “völkisches und damit auch nationalsozialistisches Denken.”<sup>157</sup> According to Staats, Bonhoeffer’s justification of the war should also be read as a confrontation of the diaspora’s relatively sheltered existence, as especially expressed in his critical analysis of the youth.<sup>158</sup> But it trapped Bonhoeffer in a contradiction. For even though he argues for a “Situationsethik” he nevertheless introduces the loyalty to one’s nation as a divine order when he says: “die Liebe zu meinem Volk wird den Mord, wird den Krieg heiligen ...”<sup>159</sup> In other words, this divine order “läßt im Kriegsfall, wenn die



eigenen Blutverwandten durch einen Angriff bedroht sind, die christlichen Gedanken der allgemeinen Brüderlichkeit, die Erstreckung des Gebotes der Nächstenliebe auf alle Menschen zurücktreten ...”<sup>160</sup> Of course, one would need to also acknowledge “daß Bonhoeffer den Krieg hier doch auch als ‘Sünde, Böses’ bezeichnet, als ‘Entsetzliches, Furchtbares, Mord’, und sagt, daß er Gewissen vergewaltigt.”<sup>161</sup> Bethge, hence, maintains that Bonhoeffer is not yet speaking his own language on this issue.<sup>162</sup> Given the diasporic context of his lectures it is interesting to observe how Bonhoeffer on the one hand acknowledges the need for transnational networks, while on the other hand also falls prey to an ideology of purity. Bonhoeffer’s ambivalence reflects the immediate influence of his context echoing Clifford’s argument that “Diaspora cultures are not separatist, though they may have separatist or irredentist moments.”<sup>163</sup> It reveals how “The specific cosmopolitanism articulated by diaspora discourses are in constitutive tension with nation-state/assimilationist ideologies.”<sup>164</sup> But it didn’t take long “bis Bonhoeffer den Selbstbetrug in dieser ungebrochenen Treue zur Erde entdeckte.”<sup>165</sup> In fact in his travel writings from America Bonhoeffer would oppose such views on the basis of a fresh reading of the sermon on the mount and argue towards an ecumenical ethics of peace.

### *The Spanish “Other”*

In the beginning Bonhoeffer does not experience the same warm welcome as in Italy. In fact, in their relation to foreigners Bonhoeffer notices a significant difference between the Spanish and the Italians: “Zum Ausländer ist der Spanier nicht servil, wie oft der Italiener, sondern korrekt, oft sogar kühl. Bei den Katalanen begegnet man häufig großer Unliebenswürdigkeit, die wohl aus der politischen Hinneigung zu Frankreich entspringt.”<sup>166</sup> But Bonhoeffer manages to build up various contacts with Spanish locals.<sup>167</sup> Via an advert placed in the newspaper “la Vanguardia” he makes the acquaintance of Luis Sánchez Sarto, employed at the publisher “Editorial Labor”, with whom he meets for regular Spanish-German conversations.<sup>168</sup> The wide range of encounters leave him with a very positive impression of the Spanish. In various letters he attempts to draw up brief character profiles that reveal as much about the observer as the observed. Bonhoeffer clearly needed time to warm up to his Spanish hosts when he confesses: “Je mehr ich die Spanier kennen lerne, desto sympathischer werden sie mir. Nur sind sie völlig anders, als man in Deutschland sich vorstellt.”<sup>169</sup>

His initial reservations were hence due to German stereotypes of the Spanish representing an experience of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild”. But the experience of living among them helped him to revise his prejudice and discover a new cultural reality: “Man lebt wirklich angenehm mit und unter ihnen; sie zanken sich nicht, haben keine Unrast, sind liebenswürdig und gefällig und dabei oft sehr intelligent, trotz aller scheinbar äußeren Unbildung; denn die Schulung ist ziemlich miserabel ...”<sup>170</sup> It is the lack of arrogance and their great sensitivity that he admires most: “sie machen garnichts aus sich und sind von einem sozialen Feingefühl, wie ich es noch nie erlebte.”<sup>171</sup> It is hence an acknowledgement of the “other” “als für mich prinzipiell Fremden” which overcomes “die Fixierung auf einen internen Standpunkt” and in this sense becomes an important experience of “Fremdheit als Komplementarität”.<sup>172</sup>

But Bonhoeffer’s observations also include more critical comments assuming an essentialised notion of oriental passivity and conveying an understanding of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” which fulfills “die *Funktion* eines signifikanten Kontrasts, der als Gegenbild, gerade die Identität des Eigenen verstärken kann.”<sup>173</sup> Complaining about the Spanish academics’ lack of interest in scholarly conversations he maintains: “Ich halte den Spanier für ungewöhnlich begabt, aber derartig indolent, daß er sich einfach nicht schult.”<sup>174</sup> This “Indolenz” is seen to reveal a particular closeness to the Orient: “In der Ruhe, Geduld und Indolenz zeigt er ganz zweifellos stark orientalistische Charaktereigentümlichkeiten ...”<sup>175</sup> This is reinforced by the general feeling “– in Sprache, Tanz, Musik, oft in den gewöhnlichsten Bewegungen – dem Orient nahe zu sein.”<sup>176</sup> Bonhoeffer’s observations illustrate both “the dislodging[of] essentialist identities in favor of more hybrid ones and a recourse to essentialized genealogical or geographic identity ...”<sup>177</sup> For Bonhoeffer works with an essentialist notion of identity in terms of the Oriental “other”, while in terms of the Spanish “other” “indolence” is seen to have come into the Spanish make up, contradicting an essentialist understanding of identity. It recognizes that “differences in human character are as much the result of historical accident and external influence as of original nature ...”<sup>178</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s characterisation thus draws on a system of classification which in this particular case opposes Oriental indolence to Western learning and once again illustrates an encounter of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild”. Building on Michel Foucault’s

insights on the logical structures of the classifications of natural history Spurr points out how “At the end of the classical period, classification had moved beyond the mere nomination of the visible to the establishment, for each natural being, of a *character* based on the internal principle of organic structure.”<sup>179</sup> This principle in turn is seen to have given rise “to a system of ordering that allowed for a hierarchy of characters depending on their relative complexity of organic structure and for classification according to certain key functions: how a species reproduces or what it eats.”<sup>180</sup> Spurr thereby emphasizes the circularity of such classifying remarks. For classification “meant no longer simply to arrange the visible, but to perform a circular analysis that related the visible to the invisible” and “its ‘deeper cause,’ then rose again toward the surface of bodies to identify the signs that confirmed the hidden cause.”<sup>181</sup> Spurr highlights how this particular “system of understanding – one that orders natural beings according to function and establishes a hierarchy based on internal character – has consequences for the classification of human races in the Western mind and ultimately for the analysis of Third World societies in Western writing.”<sup>182</sup> Bonhoeffer’s analysis also moves from the visible sign and function to the invisible character of his object. According to Spurr “the emphasis on observable phenomena obscures the way in which such observation is ordered in advance, a misrecognition that allows interpretation to pass for objective truth.”<sup>183</sup> It is along those lines that classification is perceived to be “a form of what Heidegger calls ‘enframing’ – the process by which the mind transforms the world into an object. Yet ‘enframing disguises even this, its disguising’.”<sup>184</sup> And one could argue that the weakness of character, “deduced from the relation of the visible to the invisible, is then projected back onto the concrete and observable ...”<sup>185</sup>

This particular notion of passivity is then further expanded by Bonhoeffer. For Spain as a whole is pictured as sleeping with peculiar traditions lying dormant and only at times coming to light: “Ob Spanien als Ganzes noch einmal aufwacht, wage ich nicht zu beurteilen. Aber es schlummert viel Eigenartiges und Altüberliefertes in diesem Volk und hin und wieder kommt dann auch etwas zum Durchbruch und zur Lebendigkeit.”<sup>186</sup> The state of passivity is now conceptualised in terms of an aesthetic of sleep, harbouring a *mystique* which lingers just beneath the surface and which one would associate with the cliché of the “sleeping beauty”. Bonhoeffer’s impression of a hidden cultural richness is accompanied by a profound experience of difference in

view of Spain's cultural formation: "Spanien ist ein diametraler Gegensatz zu Italien, ein Land an dem jeder Einfluß antiker Bildung - in vorschriftlicher Zeit und in der Renaissance - vorüberging, das statt dessen vierhundert Jahre lang unter der Herrschaft morgenländischer Kultur gestanden hat."<sup>187</sup> Sending his parents a picture of the cathedral of Cordoba, which originally was a mosque, Bonhoeffer remarks: "Morgenland und Abendland begegnen sich hier sehr merkwürdig, je südlicher, je mehr."<sup>188</sup> Due to his own strictly humanistic formation Bonhoeffer confesses that Spain "[einem] zunächst völlig fremd bleibt, zu dessen Verständnis einem sozusagen alle Anhaltspunkte fehlen; und das gilt eben nicht nur für das historische, sondern ganz ebenso noch für das gegenwärtige Spanien."<sup>189</sup> His comment gives expression to yet another genuine "Grenzerfahrung" in the sense of "nun erst verstehen zu lernen, was wir *nicht* verstehen."<sup>190</sup>

Paradoxically woven into this experience of alienness is also a sense of familiarity which Bonhoeffer didn't experience in Italy: "Zu dieser Fremdheit kommt aber doch irgendeine Sympathie als ein Verwandschaftsgefühl hinzu, das man Italien gegenüber wieder so nicht hat ..."<sup>191</sup> The explanation is found in the resistance toward classical humanism's influence Spain and Germany are said to share: "für Italien hat der Humanismus und die klassische Zeit die Lösung aller Probleme bedeutet, in Spanien besteht dagegen ein Widerstand, der, glaub ich, bei den Deutschen auch bis zu einem gewissen Grade immer wieder sichtbar wird."<sup>192</sup> Bonhoeffer's conclusion therefore suggests an experience of "Fremdheit als Resonanzboden des Eigenen": "Spanier und Deutsche treffen sich, glaub ich, darin, daß beide niemals dem Humanismus sich ganz erschlossen haben, sondern immer noch ein Rest blieb."<sup>193</sup> The nature of their resistance is deployed as a distinct opposition to humanism's and the classics' totalizing claims. Implied might be a defiance of what Brah describes as their "search for originary absolutes, or genuine and authentic manifestations of a stable, pre-given, unchanging identity; for pristine, pure customs and traditions or unsullied glorious pasts."<sup>194</sup>

This resistance introduces another perspective on the question of "Wirklichkeitsnähe". For Bonhoeffer's comment suggests that Spain's and Germany's reservations emerged from a sense of incompatibility between their experience of reality and the ideological interpretation offered by antiquity and humanism. It is along those lines

that Bonhoeffer speculates about how Spain's particular history is reflected in its landscape, suggesting a mysterious symbiosis between the two: "Es scheint fast als gehöre die spanische Landschaft mit der Geschichte irgendwie zusammen."<sup>195</sup> With the exception of Granada and the surroundings of Barcelona Bonhoeffer questions "die Rede vom 'schönen Spanien'" and instead refers to Spain as "ein ödes Land ..."<sup>196</sup> And again it is in contrast to Italy that Bonhoeffer argues: "Diese harmonischen Landschaftsbilder, wie in Italien, findet man hier fast garnicht."<sup>197</sup> In other words, this lack of visible harmony is seen to somehow correspond with Spain's historic reservation towards humanism. What Bonhoeffer is suggesting is that the aesthetic character of Spain's landscape imprinted itself on the country's cultural development. Humanism's ideals could not flourish in Spain's arid land.

Barcelona offered Bonhoeffer a comfortable living environment. He praises the city as "eine ungewöhnlich lebendige in wirtschaftlichem Aufschwung größten Stiles begriffene Großstadt, in der es sich in jeder Beziehung angenehm lebt."<sup>198</sup> Bonhoeffer is especially fascinated about the display of democratic spirit in the streets providing him with the encounter of a very different political reality: "Ich habe noch nie derartig praktische Demokratie gesehen wie hier, wo man den Herrn und den Diener am selben Tisch im Café zusammensitzen sehen kann ..."<sup>199</sup> He notices a lack of social resentment in the every day life on the streets: "Keiner ist so niedrig, daß er glaubt von sich niedriger denken zu müssen, als vom anderen, und keiner – zum wenigsten der König, den ich mehrmals sah – so hoch von sich denkend, daß er es sich erlaubt, auf andere herabzusehen."<sup>200</sup> Given the degree of poverty he finds in some parts of Barcelona he is surprised to find no signs of social unrest: "Im übrigen sitzen in solchen Cafés Wohlhabende, Reiche, Spießbürger und recht ärmlich Aussehende untereinander, wie mir überhaupt die "soziale Frage" im Süden (Italien) kaum eine Rolle zu spielen scheint. Die unglaublichen Verhältnisse in der hiesigen Altstadt legen dafür Zeugnis ab."<sup>201</sup>

Bonhoeffer's engagement with Spanish culture comprised a wide range of interests. His senior pastor Olbricht, though, wasn't very encouraging in this respect. Regretting the missed opportunity to watch a Catholic procession during the time of Lent, Bonhoeffer describes Olbricht as someone stuck in an experience of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild": "Olbricht hat nicht viel Ahnung und nicht viel Interesse an solchen

Dingen, er meint einfach, das sei Humbug und das genügt ihm.”<sup>202</sup> Bonhoeffer, therefore, asked one of the congregation’s elders to advise him of any important events.<sup>203</sup> Subsequently he managed to attend the Corpus Christi procession<sup>204</sup> which he described to his parents in great detail. Given the Protestant spurning of this procession and Olbricht’s very negative comments, Bonhoeffer’s overall enchantment with the event is rather unusual. His curiosity is captured by the colourful and majestic scenes displayed right in front of his eyes which are said to have taken him back 500 years in time.<sup>205</sup>

But the aesthetic of festive sentiments played out in this presentation is disrupted by Bonhoeffer’s rather harsh comments on the priests and monks: “Übrigens habe ich hier wieder einen Eindruck von dem unglaublich minderwertigen Priestermaterial gehabt.”<sup>206</sup> It is once again, as in North Africa, a macabre diversion of representation making the “other’s” facial expression rather than their speech or writing the essential defining characteristic.<sup>207</sup> Bonhoeffer proceeds from the visual to several kinds of valorizations: “Neben Mönchen und Klerikern, die wirklich an Bilder von Greco erinnern, hat der Durchschnitt erschreckend unkultivierte, dumme, versoffene und sinnliche Gesichter, - ein merkwürdiges Gegenbild zu Rom.”<sup>208</sup> It for once confirms for him the derogatory conception of religion as “Volksverdummung”.<sup>209</sup> In this respect the Catholic “other” displays but “den Charakter einer Negation der Eigenheit ...”<sup>210</sup> Bonhoeffer’s reservations recur in a letter to Seeberg where he expresses his particular difficulty to make closer contact with Spanish clerics. The conversations he had were apparently mostly by accident and not very encouraging. Once again he employs an analogy between their education and facial expression: “An den Klerus kommt man fast nicht heran, nur zufällig lernte ich den einen oder anderen Kleriker kennen, habe aber danach und nach den Gesichtern der Leute auch nicht eigentlich Sehnsucht nach näherer Bekanntschaft: ich habe noch nie derartig unkultivierte Geistlichkeit gesehen, wie hier ...”<sup>211</sup>

But his disappointment about the un-inspiring engagement with Spanish priests did not stop him from exhibiting a particular interest in traditional performances of competitions held between Arab and Christian theologians: “Ich bin zur Zeit grade auf der Suche nach alten Spielen, in denen Wettkämpfe arabischer und christlicher Theologen noch heute in den kleinen Städten der Provinz aufgeführt werden.”<sup>212</sup> The

playful engagement of different religious traditions echoes the “ ‘geniza world’ of S.D. Goitein, the Mediterranean of the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries (and beyond) where Jews, Muslims, and Christians lived, traded, borrowed, and conversed in the process of maintaining distinct communities.”<sup>213</sup> Clifford emphasizes that “Without reducing these centuries to a romanticized multiculturalism, one can recognize an extraordinary cosmopolitan network.”<sup>214</sup> It was a time when “people of distinct religions, races, cultures and languages coexisted.”<sup>215</sup> Bonhoeffer’s search therefore resembled the quest for a forgotten and lost world where a keen openness to each other’s traditions displayed the willingness to enable a genuine encounter with the religious and cultural “other”.

To his family’s surprise it was the Spanish bullfight that captured his imagination and left a lasting impression on him. Bethge mentions the amusement this attraction caused among Bonhoeffer’s students. Ten years later he would still enjoy explaining the ritual of the bullfight. According to Bethge he was able “die Nuancen dieser spanischen Schaustellung von Kraft und Eleganz ... mit offensichtlichem Sachverstand anschaulich zu machen.”<sup>216</sup> It was during the visit of his brother Klaus at Easter that the bullfight cast its spell on both Klaus and Dietrich. After the Easter sermon they visited the bull-ring.<sup>217</sup> With some surprise he confesses to his sister Sabine Leibholz: “Ich war ganz erstaunt, wieviel kaltblütiger ich das zweite Mal der Sache schon gegenüberstand, als das erste und ich muß sagen, daß ich doch von ferne ahnen kann, daß ein Reiz in dem Ganzen liegt, der es einem zur Leidenschaft werden läßt.”<sup>218</sup> Not without some self-criticism about the degree of “Verrohung” involved, he notices how repeated exposure to the bullfight helps one to look beyond the sensation and cruelty displayed and enables a more genuine understanding of its nature.<sup>219</sup> He distances himself from those whose disgust he perceives as only a necessary obligation to their Middle-European civilisation. It represents his attempt to move beyond the dominant Middle-European construction of bullfight as “Gegenbild”. But he also distinguishes himself from those whose primary attraction is a certain bloodthirstiness.<sup>220</sup> He marvels instead about the subtle lessons of the spectacle acknowledging the different levels at which one can look at the fight: “Es ist doch eine große Sache wilde ungehemmte Kraft und blinde Wut gegen disziplinierte Courage, Geistesgegenwart und Geschicklichkeit ankämpfen und unterliegen zu sehen.”<sup>221</sup> The “Fremdheit” of the bullfight is hence experienced as “Ergänzung” fed

by "Informationsbedarf, Abwechslungsbedürfnis, Neugierde und Wissenstransfer  
...<sup>222</sup>

In his attempt to explain the Spaniard's fascination with bullfighting Bonhoeffer does not shy away from a psychological interpretation which is closely linked to a theological perspective. Staats coins this particular method of interpretation a "theologische Geographie".<sup>223</sup> In its function to provide a vital outlet for humankind's passions the *corrida* is perceived to be "das notwendige Pendant zur sonntäglichen Messe ...".<sup>224</sup> It is in fact credited with the high moral standard found in Spain's everyday life: "Ich denke, es ist kein Zufall, daß im Lande des düstersten und schroffsten Katholizismus grade der Stierkampf unausrottbar festsetzt. Hier ist der Rest uneingeschränkten, leidenschaftlichen Lebens und vielleicht ist es der Stierkampf, der, grade indem er die ganze Seele des Volkes in Aufwallung, ja zum Toben bringt, eine im übrigen Leben relativ hochstehende Sittlichkeit ermöglicht, weil die Leidenschaft mit dem Stierkampf abgetötet wird ...".<sup>225</sup> Implied is a critical self-reflection on how passion and morality are negotiated in those "civilized" countries that reject the bullfight on a moral high ground. The experience of the "other" as "Ergänzung" thereby engenders "*Selbsterfahrung* im Sinne eines Aufdeckens von Lücken, Fehlstellen" within one's own reality.<sup>226</sup> The connection he draws between the bullfight and the Sunday mass can be unfolded further when read in light of his experience of something "real" during his visits to the Catholic masses in Rome. For Bonhoeffer is especially struck by the heated atmosphere and the sudden change of moods during a bullfight. It is an experience which infuses his reading of the story of Christ's passion with a whole new sense of reality: "Außerdem ist mir noch nie der Umschwung vom 'Hosianna' zum 'Kreuzige!' so gegenwärtig geworden, wie in dem geradezu irrsinnigen Toben der Menge, wenn der Torero eine gute Wendung macht und dem unmittelbar darauffolgenden ebenso irrsinnigen Schreien und Pfeifen, wenn irgendein Mißgeschick zustößt."<sup>227</sup> It is an experience of something "real" enabled by an encounter of "Fremdheit" within the context of what Hahn described, as I mentioned before, as the "Ausnahmecharakter" of the "Fest": "Man kann geradezu sagen, daß das Fest in seiner erlaubten Umkehrung oder Aufhebung des sonst Gebotenen oder Notwendigen ein allerdings zeitlich eingeschränkter Einbruch des Fremden ins Übliche und Normale ist."<sup>228</sup> Both the Catholic mass and the Spanish



bullfight, then, in their synthesis of “Fremdheit” and “Fest” provided him with a genuine “Grenzerfahrung” and the experience of something “real”.

But it was not only the bullfight that inspired his theological reflections. After having been exposed to what Bonhoeffer describes as “das Problem des Don Quijote”<sup>229</sup> by attending a film performance,<sup>230</sup> he began to read Miguel Cervantes’ novel in the original and also acquired a German edition during the World War II.<sup>231</sup> Elsner and Rubiés argue that “The point of *Don Quixote* was that the magic quest was over. Instead a different journey was offered, one which would lead to a realistic, self-critical assessment of the true nature of Spanish society and its values under the most Catholic monarchy.”<sup>232</sup> It hence becomes clear how the novel must have inspired his own desire for “Wirklichkeitsnähe”. The travelling knight’s magic quest became the blueprint for his own journey of turning to the real. Bethge emphasizes the importance the novel had for Bonhoeffer’s theological thinking: “Der edle Prinzipienritter hat sich ihm als eine Schlüsselfigur zur Ethik jener Zeit und zu seiner Situation im Tegeler Gefängnis eingeprägt.”<sup>233</sup>

Several themes of the novel resonated with Bonhoeffer’s own concerns and lent themselves as inspiration and illustration. In fact, Bethge notes that “Aus dem ‘Don Quichote’ meinte er [Bonhoeffer] mehr zu lernen als aus vielen Ethiken.”<sup>234</sup> In view of the historical backdrop of the novel Heiner Süsselbeck identifies Cervantes’ lament over “Quijotismo” as providing Bonhoeffer with an important lens to clarify the ethical crisis of his times. For idealistic principles like “Ritterlichkeit, Treue und Glauben, Ehre und Eid” proved to be inadequate for the ethical challenges of reality.<sup>235</sup> Instead they were even perceived to further “unter der Maske des Guten das Spiel des Bösen ...”<sup>236</sup> It is in his *Ethik* that Bonhoeffer therefore maintains that “Ein Gutseinwollen an sich, gewissermaßen als Selbstzweck, als Lebensberuf, verfällt der Ironie der Unwirklichkeit ...”<sup>237</sup> Bonhoeffer is struck by how blind and deaf, like Don Quijote, those have to be who pursue the ideal of pure virtues. Such an attitude discloses both self-deceit and an un-willingness to take responsibility in the world for fear of risking one’s “private Untadeligkeit ...”<sup>238</sup> The character of the travelling knight becomes a powerful example for past representatives of various ethical traditions who all remain imprisoned in their commitment to ethical principles and tragically fail to respond to the demands of reality.<sup>239</sup> It is in this sense that Don

Quijote becomes an important travel companion to Bonhoeffer.<sup>240</sup> For he reminds him of the limits of an ethical thinking in principles, encouraging a radical turning to reality.

Don Quijote remains an important reference point during his imprisonment. For writing to Bethge about the “Angst ... vor dem selbstverständlichen, schlichten Tun und vor dem Aufsichnehmen notwendiger Entscheidungen”<sup>241</sup> Bonhoeffer also discusses the difficult decision between “Widerstand und Ergebung” in view of the knight’s tragic fate. In recognizing a radical opposition between Don Quijote’s and Sancho Pansa’s approach to life he employs both characters to typify the dilemma of negotiating between “Widerstand und Ergebung”: “Ich habe mir hier oft Gedanken darüber gemacht, wo die Grenzen zwischen dem notwendigen Widerstand gegen das ‘Schicksal’ und der ebenso notwendigen Ergebung liegen. Der Don Quijote ist das Symbol für die Fortsetzung des Widerstandes bis zum Widersinn, ja zum Wahnsinn ...; der Sancho Pansa ist der Repräsentant des satten und schlauen Sichabfindens mit dem Gegebenen.”<sup>242</sup> In the end Süsselbeck sees Bonhoeffer suggesting a complementary interpretation in order to meet the demands of reality: “Widerstand und Ergebung schließen einander nicht aus. Glaube an Gottes Führung bedeutet, die Handlungsmuster von Don Quijote ebenso wie die von Sancho Pansa in sich zu vereinen. Beide korrigieren sich, um nicht der Wirklichkeit so oder so zu verfallen.”<sup>243</sup> In an attempt to clarify the intricate relationship Bonhoeffer envisions between “Widerstand und Ergebung” Süsselbeck refers to Bethge’s succinct explanation: “Der Gegensatz zu Ergebung heißt nicht ‘Widerstand, und der zu Widerstand nicht Ergebung, sondern er heißt zu beidem [...]: Gleichgültigkeit.’ Und weiter: ‘Widerstand bedarf des Kontrapunktes bzw. der Ergänzung durch Ergebung. Sonst wird er steril. [...] Ebenso bedarf die Ergebung des Kontrapunktes bzw. der Ergänzung durch den Widerstand. Sonst wird sie zur Anpassung.’”<sup>244</sup> The argument implies an engagement of reality which identifies with both Don Quijote and Sancho Pansa. For the danger is to take one side instead of recognizing how much the two characters are dependent on each other, illustrating the difficult balancing act of a faith that is committed to reality.<sup>245</sup> But to Bonhoeffer such reconciliation of ethical positions can only be achieved with an understanding of reality in view of God.<sup>246</sup>

## Conclusion

Early on during his stay in Barcelona Bonhoeffer wonders: “Meine Theologie beginnt humanistisch zu werden; was soll das?”<sup>247</sup> He hereby provides us with the key term to describe his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” in Spain. He continues to ask himself in this respect: “Ob Barth je im Ausland war? – Wittigs ‘Leben Jesu’ macht mir sehr starken Eindruck. – Morgen soll ich zum ersten Mal hier predigen. Ich habe Röm 11,6 als Text ausgesucht, nachdem ich viele andere Texte zu bearbeiten begonnen hatte.”<sup>248</sup> According to Staats it was through this experience abroad that Bonhoeffer seemed to have realized what he misses in Barth’s “Offenbarungstheologie”: “eine humanistische als eine auf die ganze Welt in ihrer Geschichte bezogene Theologie.”<sup>249</sup> Staats’s argument takes its lead not only from the comment made about Barth but also from Bonhoeffer’s frequent use of Greek mythology to illustrate his sermons and talks in Barcelona.<sup>250</sup> It was for example with the help of the Greek myth of the giant Antäus that he interpreted the Christian pilgrimage in terms of a faithful commitment to this world as exemplified in the incarnation. Bonhoeffer hereby responded to Friedrich Nietzsche’s call for a reading of antiquity towards a renewed faithfulness to the earth.<sup>251</sup>

This can be further substantiated by Bonhoeffer’s remark about Josef Wittig’s *Leben Jesus in Palästina, Schlesien und anderswo*<sup>252</sup> immediately following his remark about Barth. The book is said to have made a strong impression on him.<sup>253</sup> It portrays Christianity’s fundamental openness to the world and suggests travelling as an important element in one’s theological formation. In order to know how the apostle Paul might have preached in Berlin any priest aspiring to become a new Paul “muß mit Paulus in Jerusalem, Athen und Rom gewesen sein ...”<sup>254</sup> This strong emphasis on the particularity of each cultural context corresponds with Bonhoeffer’s important critique of the “Prinzipienethik” which was for the first time expressed in Barcelona.<sup>255</sup> But it also highlights Bonhoeffer’s concern for “Wirklichkeitsnähe”, this time in view of remaining true to one’s particular context. Finally, Bonhoeffer’s mentioning of having chosen Romans 11:6 as his scripture reading immediately after his positive remark of Wittig’s book once again touches on the theme of openness to the world.<sup>256</sup> The sermon discusses God’s coming into the world as an important element for understanding that woven into the Christian concept of mercy is a

fundamental turning towards the whole world.<sup>257</sup> It thereby grounds Christianity's openness to the world in an incarnational understanding of God's mercy.

This diary note of Bonhoeffer therefore opens up yet another important perspective on his comment of having turned “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” during his early journeys. In line with our own analysis it suggests a reading of his drive for “Wirklichkeitsnähe” in terms of a renewed openness and faithfulness to the earth. Such faithfulness implied a genuine encounter with the reality of the “other” which would resist assimilating him or her as “Resonanzboden des Eigenen”, “Gegenbild” or “Ergänzung”. In those instances the “other” proved to be but an object of one's “phraseology”, a thinking in closed systems of prejudice and stereotypes, classifications and projections. A true encounter with the reality of the “other” only emerged whenever Bonhoeffer experienced a genuine “Grenzerfahrung” placing his experience within Schäffter's fourth *modus* of “Fremdheit als Komplementarität”. These “Grenzerfahrungen” conveyed a wide spectrum of experiences highlighting the rich texture of Bonhoeffer's turning to the real. It included experiences of displacement, of constructing homes away from home, and of negotiating identities through processes of accommodation and resistance. His pastoral work not only confronted him with the diaspora community's homing desire but also with those suffering under harsh socio-economic circumstances taking him to alien and unfamiliar realities and enabling him to discover “real” human beings. In the midst of a world determined by Christian hypocrisy, nationalism and provincialism Bonhoeffer pursued his life long desire “völlig auf eigenen Füßen zu stehen zu kommen ...” It not only meant seeing things “from below”, but to be inspired by both God's incarnation and the story of the giant Antäus in order to stand with both feet firmly on the ground. It suggested an openness to engage the world with its rich history and particularity of different cultures and nations while listening to the claim God makes through the alien “other”. The Spanish “other” provided Bonhoeffer with moments of genuine “Fremdheit” taking him on a journey through crowded coffee bars, sacred processions, arid landscapes and heated bullfights. Each encounter held the potential for yet another “Grenzerfahrung” helping Bonhoeffer to read his desire for “Wirklichkeitsnähe” in the light of Don Quijote's tragic quest. Writing from Berlin to Barcelona in 1930, after his stay, about the need to discover the “‘Geist’ wirklich im besonderen, wie nie bisher, gerade in der ‘Materie’, in der konkreten gegebenen

Wirklichkeit“<sup>258</sup> Bonhoeffer once again affirms the important learning experience Barcelona provided when he continues to argue: “und von hier aus gesehen liegt für mich auch in dem Barcelonenser Leben doch irgendetwas wie unbewußtes Wahrheitssuchen ausgesprochen.”<sup>259</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Von Hase and Staats in: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Keith W. Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1984), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Robin Cohen's *Global Diaspora* illuminates how the idea of a diaspora varies greatly: “The word ‘diaspora’ is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over). When applied to humans, the ancient Greek thought of diaspora as migration and colonization. By contrast, for Jews, Africans, Palestinians and Armenians the expression acquired a more sinister and brutal meaning. Diaspora signified a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile. Other peoples abroad who have also maintained strong collective identities have, in recent years, defined themselves as diasporas, though they were neither active agents of colonization nor passive victims of persecution.” Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas. An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001), IX. My analysis is based on Clifford's broader definition that explains how “‘the term [diaspora] that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community ...’” James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London; England: Harvard University Press, 1997), 245. The rationale for including such a wide range of experiences is based on the recognition of complex cultural formations and the observation “that the old localizing strategies – by bounded community, by organic culture, by region, by center and periphery – may obscure as much as they reveal.” Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 245. It becomes clear that “diasporic forms of longing, memory, and (dis)identification are shared by a broad spectrum of minority and migrant populations.” Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 247.

<sup>4</sup> Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 1967, 8 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 139.

<sup>6</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 75.

<sup>7</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 75. In his “Nachtrag” Reinhart Staats refers to Bonhoeffer's gratitude towards Diestel: “In einem Brief vom 5. November 1942 zu Diestels 70. Geburtstag erinnerte Bonhoeffer an zwei folgenreiche Telefonate mit Diestel: im ersten vom Dezember 1927 habe Diestel ihn gefragt, ob er als Vikar nach Barcelona gehen wolle, wodurch ‘mein Leben’ – wie er schreibt – ‘auf ein Gleis gestellt worden ist, von dem es nicht mehr heruntergekommen ist und kommen wird’”. Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 636.

<sup>8</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 276.

<sup>9</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 274.

<sup>10</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 276.

- <sup>11</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 251.
- <sup>12</sup> Julika Griem, "Hybridität," in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur - und Kulturtheorie: Ansätze - Personen - Grundbegriffe*, ed. Ansgar Nünning (Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler, 1998), 220-21.
- <sup>13</sup> John Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell. A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 113.
- <sup>14</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell. A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 113.
- <sup>15</sup> Cohen explains the nature of trade diaspora as follows: "Merchants from one community would live as aliens in another town, learn the language, the customs and the commercial practices of their hosts then starting the exchange of goods." Cohen, *Global Diasporas. An Introduction*, 83.
- <sup>16</sup> Bonhoeffer himself describes the congregation as being "typisch für ausländische Kaufmannsgemeinden." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>17</sup> Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 182.
- <sup>18</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 182.
- <sup>19</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 244.
- <sup>20</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 182.
- <sup>21</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 251.
- <sup>22</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 244.
- <sup>23</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 244.
- <sup>24</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 255.
- <sup>25</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 208.
- <sup>26</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 208.
- <sup>27</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 208.
- <sup>28</sup> Bethge talks about the "modisch runde[n] Hut ..." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 140.
- <sup>29</sup> Bonhoeffer writes: "Bereits am 2.Tag, den ich hier war, ist mein Hut Gegenstand des Gesprächs und der Bewunderung für die Primaner der deutschen Schule geworden. Der Pastorsohn sei nach haus gekommen und habe auch so einen Hut haben wollen; das wäre modern und die in der Klasse fänden das auch. Vielleicht führt man sich auf solcher Weise hier ein." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 34.
- <sup>30</sup> Ortfried Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schöffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 25.
- <sup>31</sup> Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 25.
- <sup>32</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 129.
- <sup>33</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 129.
- <sup>34</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26.
- <sup>35</sup> Bonhoeffer writes to his grandmother: "Man lernt hier Leute kennen, die von ganz einfachen Anfängen sich aufgearbeitet haben und sich in Formen und in Sprache eine derartige Sicherheit und Gewandheit angeeignet haben, daß man nicht in Deutschland wüßte, wo man sie gesellschaftlich einzuordnen hätte. Es ist einfach ein Stand für sich, der, wie mir scheint, in Deutschland garnicht so existiert, hier aber höchst zahlreich ist." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 36.
- <sup>36</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 33.
- <sup>37</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 140.
- <sup>38</sup> Bonhoeffer writes to Paula Bonhoeffer: "Es sind fast durchweg Kaufleute, mit denen man zusammenkommt, nur die paar Lehrer von der Schule fallen heraus. Die Gesprächsthemata sind naturgemäß zunächst ungewohnt. Heute erzählt mir der Direktor der Deutschen Bank hier, daß auf einem Ball bei ... 10 000 Peseten allein auf die Dekoration verwandt worden wären, wieviel Flaschen Sekt getrunken worden seien und daß es ihn wundere, daß bei wieder anderen Leuten nur 84 Flaschen Sekt getrunken worden seien; daß auf einem Ball im Klub 3 Tänzerinnen von Moulin Rouge eingeführt worden seien zum Entsetzen aller, und daß der Herr ... sie eingeführt habe, der überhaupt ... u.s.f. ..." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 33.
- <sup>39</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 51-52.
- <sup>40</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 141.
- <sup>41</sup> Bonhoeffer writes to Karl-Friedrich: "die deutschen [Geschäftsleute] bauen ab, weil sie die geschäftliche Konkurrenz des anderen Auslands kaum aushalten können, altrenommierte Geschäfte und Unternehmungen gehen ein, so ist kaum Platz für die Alten, geschweige für neu Hinzuziehende, so herrscht unter den hiesigen Deutschen viel Arbeitslosigkeit und daher die ganze Not." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 72.

- <sup>42</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 190.
- <sup>43</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 192. "On the other hand," Brah highlights, "home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall ..." Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 192.
- <sup>44</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 72.
- <sup>45</sup> Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 192-93.
- <sup>46</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 255.
- <sup>47</sup> Bonhoeffer had to prepare 19 sermons in the one year, which according to Bethge was more than what was recommended by the regulations for a "Vikar". Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 144.
- <sup>48</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 468.
- <sup>49</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 488.
- <sup>50</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 493-94.
- <sup>51</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 456. It was one of Bonhoeffer's favorite quotations during his ministry in Barcelona. Cf. also Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 485 and 535.
- <sup>52</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 530.
- <sup>53</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 530.
- <sup>54</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 488.
- <sup>55</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 530.
- <sup>56</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 534.
- <sup>57</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 536. The editors comment: "B[onhoeffer] identifiziert die legendäre Gestalt Ahasver nicht, wie das antisemitische Schrifttum seit der Mitte des 19. Jhs., mit dem jüdischen Volk. Er übernimmt das Bild aus der literarisch-romantischen Tradition; [...] Die Legende selbst ist seit 1602 bezeugt." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 536, footnote 8.
- <sup>58</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 539. Bonhoeffer quotes the beginning of the fourth stanza of G. Tersteegen's hymn "Nun sich der Tag geendet ..." See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 539, footnote 18.
- <sup>59</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 81.
- <sup>60</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>61</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>62</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>63</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 77. It is, of course, not a rejection of the value of theoretical insights for the sake of practical experience. Instead he suggests a hermeneutical circle in which the challenges of practical work become the starting point for re-visiting the theory acquired: "und das alles wird doch wieder zum Ansatzpunkt, von dem aus man das ganze Erarbeitete von Neuem durchprüft. So glaube ich, daß meine Zeit hier – gerade außerhalb Deutschlands – ihre Bedeutung für mich hat, die es auszunutzen gilt." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 77-78. Bonhoeffer affirms his passionate commitment to scholarship: "Ich bin gern hier, werde aber auch gern wieder zurückkommen; denn die Wissenschaft, wenn sie einen einmal gepackt hat, läßt einen nicht mehr los; und daß sie mich gepackt hat, das habe ich außer ihnen nur noch ganz wenigen zu danken." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 78.
- <sup>64</sup> Bonhoeffer's critical thoughts on "Wissenschaft" echoed his major emphasis on the nexus between reality and ethics, but also corresponded with what Harnack himself was to write in 1930 in his *Stufen wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis*: "Wissenschaft ist die Erkenntnis des Wirklichen zu zweckvollem Handeln ..." Reinhart Staats, "Nachwort," in *Barcelona, Berlin, Amerika 1928-1931*, ed. Reinhart Staats and Hans Christoph von Hase, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 624.
- <sup>65</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>66</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>67</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 23.
- <sup>68</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>69</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>70</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 82.
- <sup>71</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 140.
- <sup>72</sup> Bethge notes about the congregation: "1885 gegründet, lebte die unierte Gemeinde ohne konfessionelles Bewußtsein. Man nannte sich 'evangelisch'. Die Gründung ließ auf reformierte

Herkunft schließen. ... Unter den 6000 Deutschen der Kolonie zählte die Gemeinde etwa dreihundert Mitglieder. Davon kamen durchschnittlich vierzig Menschen zum Gottesdienst." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 139-40.

<sup>73</sup> See Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 129.

<sup>74</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 25.

<sup>75</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 130.

<sup>76</sup> The lecture was held on 11 December 1928. Bonhoeffer's argument includes historical-critical methods and dialectical theology's affirmation of God as the totaliter aliter which must have been strange and difficult to understand for his audience. See Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 150.

<sup>77</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 150. It is considered a thought, which Bonhoeffer might have derived in the first place from Friedrich Nauman. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 150.

<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 65.

<sup>79</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 65. In a slightly more cynical tone Bonhoeffer comments to his grandmother: "Diese Leute stehen der Kirche wohl ebenso positiv gegenüber wie dem Sport oder wie der deutschnationalen Partei, nur wenig aktiv." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 36.

<sup>80</sup> Bonhoeffer writes: "Wir wissen alle, daß Christus faktisch aus unserem Leben eliminiert worden ist, man baut ihm wohl seinen Tempel, aber man wohnt in seinem eigenen Haus, Christus ist Sache der Kirche bzw. der Kirchlichkeit einer Gruppe von Menschen geworden, nicht des Lebens. Die Religion spielt für die Psyche des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts die Rolle des sogenannten guten Zimmers, in das man sich gern auf ein paar Stunden zurückzieht, um dann aber wieder gleich darauf in seine Arbeitsstube zu treten. Eins ist aber klar, daß wir Christus nur verstehen, wenn wir uns zu ihm in einem schroffen Entweder-Oder entscheiden. Zur Verzierung und Verschönerung unseres Lebens ist er nicht ans Kreuz gegangen. Wollen wir ihn haben, dann beansprucht er Entscheidendes über unser ganzes Leben zu sagen. Wir verstehen ihn nicht, wenn wir ihm nur eine Provinz unseres geistigen Lebens einräumen, vielmehr nur dann, wenn wir es an ihm allein orientieren oder ein glattes: Nein sprechen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 302-03.

<sup>81</sup> Staats, "Nachwort," 617.

<sup>82</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 147.

<sup>83</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 147.

<sup>84</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 473.

<sup>85</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 91.

<sup>86</sup> See the subtitle of Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*.

<sup>87</sup> "Siehe ich bin bei euch alle Tage bis an der Welt Ende."

<sup>88</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 467-68.

<sup>89</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 468.

<sup>90</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 36-38. The minister of the congregation, Fritz Olbricht comments very positively on these activities: "Besonders hat er sich liebevoll und mit großem Eifer um die heranwachsende Jugend gekümmert, die mit Begeisterung an ihm hing. Hauptsächlich zeigte sich das durch den guten Besuch der Kindergottesdienste, die regelmäßig Sonntags stattfanden und die ihm ganz übertragen waren. In geradezu musterhafter Weise hat er am Sonntag vor Weihnachten mit den Kindern in der Kirche ein Krippenspiel aufgeführt, das durch unendliche Proben und Einstudieren viel gründliche Arbeit erforderte. Unter stärkster Beteiligung der deutschen Kolonie verlief dasselbe zur größten Zufriedenheit." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 134.

<sup>91</sup> "Die prinzipielle Schwierigkeit bleibt: man soll Milch geben, und weiß doch nicht, was das heißt, und ob man nicht aus Versehen Zuckerwasser gibt. Wenn mir einer eine Exegese von 1.Kor.3,2 gäbe, wäre viel geholfen; auch für das "Problem des Kindes in der Theologie", - (über das ich zu arbeiten gedenke im Zusammenhang mit dem Problem des Bewußtseins) - und damit für den Kindergottesdienst." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 91-92. See also Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 85.

<sup>92</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 134.; Bericht von Fritz Olbricht an den deutschen evangelischen Kirchenausschuss, Barcelona, 26.2.1929, 133-135. Bonhoeffer describes the nature of those evenings in a letter to his parents: "Dazu kommt nun noch der Primanerabend, der sich sehr hübsch anläßt. Die Leute sind sehr bei der Sache, wenn auch durch die unglaubliche Vorbereitung auf der Schule sehr ahnungslos. Wir sprechen zur Zeit vom Wesen des Christentums und werden dann



einzelne Probleme, zunächst das Problem der Unsterblichkeit besprechen. Dazu müssen die Primaner immer etwas lesen, worüber referiert und diskutiert wird." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 114-15.

<sup>93</sup> "Bei den Jungen hat man den Eindruck eines völligen Mangels an Ernst; sie haben von Krieg, Revolution und Nachwehen dieser Zeit, nichts oder wenig erlebt, wohnen schön und bequem, bei immer schönem Wetter; wie sollte das anders sein? Die Zeit der Jugendbewegung in Deutschland ist hier spurlos vorübergegangen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 26.

<sup>94</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 115.

<sup>95</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 144.

<sup>96</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 144.

<sup>97</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 125-26. and see Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 133-34.

<sup>98</sup> Staats notes: "Niemals hernach hat er [Bonhoeffer] deutsche evangelische Volkskirchlichkeit so hautnah erlebt. Die Auslandskirchen pflegen meist das heimatliche Volkskirchenideal am gründlichsten: Krippenspiel, Gesangsverein, "Hilfsverein für verarmte und bedürftige Deutsche in Spanien" usw." Staats, "Nachwort," 617-18.

<sup>99</sup> Staats, "Nachwort," 617-18.

<sup>100</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 19.

<sup>101</sup> Communicated by Susanne Dreß. See Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 42. and Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 130..

<sup>102</sup> Bethge notes how Bonhoeffer appealed to his parents "nicht nur mit Anfragen wegen ärztlicher Beratung, für Atteste oder Verschreibungen, sondern auch mit Bitten um zinslose Darlehen. Nie bat er seinen Vater vergeblich. Mit einem solchen Darlehen hat er zu Weihnachten seine beiden Wirtinnen beschenkt." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 141.

<sup>103</sup> Bethge explains: "Die Geborgenheit des Elternhauses und sein glücklicher Geschwisterkreis hat Dietrich Bonhoeffer später manchmal auch beunruhigt. Plötzlich konnte er sich eingestehen, dieses Haus habe ihn von gewissen Schattenseiten des Lebens ferngehalten und von den sozial Benachteiligten isoliert. Solche waren in diesem Kreis wohl Gegenstand von großzügigen Festbescherungen, von Spenden oder auch besonderen Einladungen. ... Doch bei all dem war sich Dietrich Bonhoeffer des abgeschirmten Lebens im Elternhaus bewußt." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 41-42.

<sup>104</sup> Bethge notes: "Diese Beunruhigung hat ihn bis in die Tegeler Gefängniszelle begleitet. In einem dort entstandenen Dramenversuch ließ er einen jungen Proletarier dem Gegenspieler, einem Bürgersohn aus einer Arztfamilie, eben diese Sicherheit zum Vorwurf machen. Dietrich Bonhoeffer war von frühester Kindheit an gewohnt, der Überlegene und nicht Opfer zu sein." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 42.

<sup>105</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 35.

<sup>106</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 35-36.

<sup>107</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 96.

<sup>108</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 70-71.

<sup>109</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 90.

<sup>110</sup> See the rhetoric of idealization in David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1993), 125-40.

<sup>111</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21.

<sup>112</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 90-91. Bonhoeffer quotes Isaiah 65:1: "Ich werde gesucht von denen, die nicht nach mir fragten ... und zu denen, die meinen Namen nicht anrufen, spreche ich: Hier bin ich."

<sup>113</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21.

<sup>114</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21.

<sup>115</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 43-60.

<sup>116</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 22.

<sup>117</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 22.

<sup>118</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 285-345. The three evening lectures were devoted to the Old Testament, the New Testament, and finally to ethical questions.

<sup>119</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 285. Bonhoeffer wonders: "Wer wagt es, allgemeingültig zu entscheiden über die brennenden Probleme der Ethik, über das Recht des Krieges, der Wirtschaftskonkurrenz, über die neue Gesellschaftsordnung, über die Erziehung des jungen

Geschlechts, über das Mysterium der Sexualität?" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 286.

<sup>120</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 286.

<sup>121</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 286.

<sup>122</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 286, footnote 2. The editors refer to a letter of Adolf von Harnack to W. Stapel, 24.9.1925.

<sup>123</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 285.

<sup>124</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 287.

<sup>125</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 287.

<sup>126</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 287.

<sup>127</sup> It is a symbolic journey through ancient times inviting the audience to explore the world of Israel's prophets, "eine Welt, die in den glutvollen Farben des Orients gewebt ist, in der die Leidenschaft und der Eifer um Gott das Regiment führt, in der es mit tausend Pulsen hämmert und schlägt" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 287-88.

<sup>128</sup> Bethge observes: "Bonhoeffer's Leidenschaft spürt man bei der Schilderung des 'Berufenen', der leidet, weil er im Bunde mit Gott ist; dem der universale Gott den Nationalismus zerschlägt; der nicht mit ansehen kann, wenn kultische Verehrungsakte 'Dekadenz' und Zynismus den Menschen überdecken." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 149. It is in this context that Bonhoeffer just like in his North African diary works with the image of the vessel to describe the human being. But this time the vessel is seen to break under the impact of the divine Other: "Gott hat sich ein Gefäß seines Willens ausgewählt, aber er zerbricht das menschliche Gefäß, weil er zu gewaltig ist, Gott zerreißt, zerbricht, vernichtet die seelisch-harmonische Gestalt des Menschen, durch den er sich verkünden läßt, läßt ihn zusammenbrechen unter der Last, die er ihm auferlegt und die kein Sterblicher tragen kann, nämlich Träger des lebendigen Gottes zu sein, Gott selbst wirkt die Tragödie des Prophetenlebens, damit an dieser Niederlage des Menschlichen die Gewalt, der Anspruch, die Last der göttlichen Forderung hell ins Licht trete." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 292.

<sup>129</sup> Bonhoeffer criticizes: "man deutet Geschichte nach einem System, man ist im Besitz der Methoden, um Geschichte deuten zu können, man verfügt über die Idee und damit offenbar auch über die Geschichte. Für solche Betrachtung kann die Geschichte selbst prinzipiell nichts Neues sagen, es fügt sich ja alles in das System, in dessen Besitz man ist; d.h. die Geschichte kann für mich dann nicht mehr absolute Bedeutung haben; die Geschichte ist relativiert durch die Idee. Konkret gesprochen bedeutet das, daß man zum Verständnis historischer Gegebenheiten nicht über die Maßstäbe, die einem zur Bewertung von vornherein zur Verfügung stehen hinauskommt, auch wenn sie den Gegebenheiten nicht entfernt gerecht werden." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 306.

<sup>130</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 307.

<sup>131</sup> Bonhoeffer suggests: "wir lassen das Neue Testament wirklich reden und sind einmal nur Hörer, vernehmen den Anspruch, den dieses Buch stellt in seiner ganzen Macht und setzen uns so im Zentrum der Sache in wirkliche Begegnung mit der Geschichte auseinander und das soll unser Weg sein." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 307. Only then is one able to encounter Jesus as God's revelation in this world. Such an encounter is constituted by God as "der der Welt schlechthin Überlegene, der schlechthin transzendente, d.h. der Welt ferne, ganz andere, dem Menschen und seinem Wesen völlig ungleiche, menschlichem Denken und Wollen für immer Unerreichbare" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 314. God's absolute and radical claim is seen to call in turn for "restlose Anspruchslosigkeit des Menschen" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 314.

<sup>132</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 315.

<sup>133</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 317.

<sup>134</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 318.

<sup>135</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 318. Christianity's central idea then is God's way to us, most clearly expressed in Bonhoeffer's argument that "Christus ... nicht der Bringer einer neuen Religion [ist], sondern der Bringer Gottes" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 320-21. Bethge hereby notes: "Dieser Satz ist bis auf sein letztes Wort – das aber dann die ganze Bereicherung anzeigt – fast gleichlautend mit dem Satz aus "Widerstand und Ergebung" von 1944, wo es heißt: "Jesus ruft nicht zu einer neuen Religion, sondern zum Leben." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 152.

<sup>136</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 514.

<sup>137</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 515.

<sup>138</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 515.

<sup>139</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 516.

<sup>140</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 516.

<sup>141</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 516.

<sup>142</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 516. Antäus is one of Bonhoeffer's favorite characters. See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 344 -345.. In his novel from prison Heinrich says to Christoph: "Ihr habt ein Fundament, ihr habt Boden unter den Füßen, ihr habt einen Platz in der Welt, für euch gibt es Selbstverständlichkeiten, für die ihr einsteht und für die ihr euch auch ruhig den Kopf abschlagen lassen könnt, weil ihr wißt, daß eure Wurzeln so tief liegen, daß sie wieder treiben werden. Für euch kommt es nur auf das eine an, die Füße auf dem Boden zu behalten. Sonst ginge es euch wie dem Riesen Antäus, der seine Kraft nur aus der Berührung seiner Füße mit der Erde empfing und sie verlor, als Herkules ihn im Kampf von der Erde losriß. Es gibt zwar auch bei euch Dummköpfe, die von selbst den Boden verlassen, auf dem sie gewachsen sind, aus Neugier oder aus Eitelkeit oder weil sie närrischerweise glauben, damit uns zu gewinnen – Spreu, die der Wind verweht. Auf den Boden unter den Füßen kommt es an; wenn man leben will – und diesen Boden haben wir nicht; [...] Gib mir Boden unter den Füßen – gib mir den archimedischen Punkt, auf dem ich stehen kann – und alles wäre anders." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Fragmente Aus Tegel*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Renate Bethge and Ilse Tödt, vol. 7 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 69-71. In view of the Archimedian point see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 368-69..

<sup>143</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 323-45.

<sup>144</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 323.

<sup>145</sup> Bonhoeffer argues as follows: "Die Ethik ist Sache des Blutes und Sache der Geschichte, sie ist nichts schlechthin vom Himmel auf die Erde herabgekommenes, sie ist vielmehr ein Kind der Erde; darum ändert sie mit den Wendungen der Geschichte wie mit der Erneuerung des Blutes, dem Wandel der Generationen ihr Gesicht. Es gibt eine deutsche Ethik und eine französische Ethik wie eine amerikanische Ethik und keine ist ethischer oder unethischer als die anderen" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 323.

<sup>146</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 344. Bonhoeffer attempts to sketch the radical changes around moral issues in the past 20 years. They are experienced as a "geistige Revolution" which still shapes the presence: "Alles Feste ist erweicht, alles Sichere unsicher, alles Selbstverständliche fragwürdig geworden; politisch, literarisch, philosophisch, ethisch." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 324. The central idea of the movement is seen to be the rigorous and sincere pursuit of the notion of truth making the cultural crisis an ethical one: "Man will gegen ein innerlich unwahr gewordenes Kulturganzes sturmlaufen, will die Fesseln der Wahrheit lösen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 325. Even though Bonhoeffer remains very critical of its results, as for example in the field of contemporary literature, he still recognizes a sincere motivation: "Es ist vielmehr das erwähnte Bedürfnis ehrlich, wahrhaftig zu sein den Dingen des Lebens gegenüber, auch wo sie bei der öffentlichen moralischen Meinung Anstoß erregen können. Es ist ein fast naiv zu nennender Idealismus, der durch diese Literaturgattung geht; aber es ist doch ein ethisches Bemühen dem ganzen Unternehmen nicht abzusprechen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 325. Acknowledging its existing "Wille zu neuer ethischer Gestaltung und Durchdringung des Lebens" it is Bonhoeffer's ambition to provide the correct "Ansatzpunkt" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 326.

<sup>147</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 327. Bonhoeffer explains: "Die christliche Botschaft steht jenseits von Gut und Böse; und das muß so sein; denn sollte die Gnade Gottes abhängig gemacht werden vom Menschen je nach gut und böse, so wäre wieder ein Anspruch des Menschen an Gott begründet, damit aber Gott die alleinige Macht und Ehre angetastet." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 327. The consequence of this argument is according to Bonhoeffer: "Christentum und Ethik haben gar nichts miteinander zu tun, christliche Ethik gibt es nicht, es gibt von der Idee des Christentums aus keinen Übergang zur Idee der Ethik." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 327.

<sup>148</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 330. Bonhoeffer argument is developed as follows: Der Sinn der gesamten ethischen Gebote Jesu ist vielmehr der, dem Menschen zu sagen: Du stehst vor dem Angesicht Gottes, Gottes Gnade waltet über dir, du stehst aber zum Andern in der Welt, mußt handeln und wirken, so sei bei deinem Handeln eingedenk, daß du unter Gottes Augen handelst, daß er seinen Willen hat, den er getan haben will. Welcher Art dieser Wille ist, das wird dir der Augenblick sagen; es gilt nur, sich klar zu sein, daß der eigene Wille jedesmal in den göttlichen Willen hineingezwungen werden muß, daß der eigene Wille aufgegeben werden muß, wenn der göttliche verwirklicht werden soll; und sofern also da völlige persönliche Anspruchslosigkeit des Menschen

erforderlich ist im Handeln vor dem Auge Gottes, kann das ethische Handeln des Christen als Liebe bezeichnet werden. Das aber ist nicht ein neues Prinzip, sondern aus der Stellung des Menschen vor Gott gewonnen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 329-30.

<sup>149</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 330.

<sup>150</sup> Bonhoeffer explains: "Der Christ schafft sich die Maßstäbe für gut und böse selbst, die Rechtfertigung seines Handelns kann nur er selbst geben, wie auch nur er die Verantwortung tragen kann. Der Christ schafft neue Tafeln, neue Dekaloge, wie es Nietzsche vom Übermenschen sagte; der Übermensch Nietzsches ist wahrhaftig nicht, wie er meinte, das Gegenbild des Christen, sondern ohne es zu wissen, hat Nietzsche hier viele Züge des freigewordenen Christen, wie ihn Paulus und Luther beschreiben und kennen, hineingetragen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 331.

<sup>151</sup> "In der ethischen Entscheidung werden wir in die tiefste Einsamkeit geführt, die Einsamkeit in der ein Mensch vor dem lebendigen Gott steht. Da kann uns keiner beistehen, keiner etwas abnehmen, da legt Gott eine Last auf, die wir allein tragen müssen. In dem Bewußtsein von Gott angerufen, in Anspruch genommen zu sein, erwacht erst unser Ich. Erst durch den Ruf Gottes werde ich "Ich", isoliert von allen anderen, von Gott zur Verantwortung gezogen, mich allein wissend der Ewigkeit gegenüber. Und weil ich in der Einsamkeit Gott ins Auge sehe, darum kann nur ich für mich ganz persönlich wissen, was gut und was böse ist." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 331-32.

<sup>152</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 153.

<sup>153</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 153.

<sup>154</sup> "Gott ruft das Volk zur Mannigfaltigkeit, zum Kampf und Sieg. Auch die Kraft ist von Gott und die Macht und der Sieg, denn Gott schafft die Jugend bei Mensch und Volk und liebt die Jugend, denn Gott selbst ist ewig jung und stark und sieghaft. Und die Angst und die Schwächlichkeit soll von dem Mut und der Stärke besiegt werden. Sollte nun ein Volk, das so den Ruf Gottes an seinem eigenen Leben, an seiner Jugend und seiner Stärke erfährt, sollte ein solches Volk nicht diesem Rufe folgen dürfen, auch wenn es über das Leben anderer Völker hinweggeht? Gott ist der Herr der Geschichte; und beugt sich ein Volk diesem heiligen Willen, der die Geschichte lenkt, in Demut dann kann es mit Gott in seiner Jugend und Stärke das Schwache und mutlose überwinden; dann wird Gott mit ihm sein." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 339-440.

<sup>155</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 156.

<sup>156</sup> Staats, "Nachwort," 618.

<sup>157</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 337, footnote 29.

<sup>158</sup> Staats, "Nachwort," 618.

<sup>159</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 338.

<sup>160</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 337, footnote 29.

<sup>161</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 153.

<sup>162</sup> Bethge explains: "In Wahrheit kamen die 'Naturbedingungen des Kampfes ums Dasein als Grundlage unserer Existenz' von Friedrich Naumann, auf den sich Bonhoeffer in diesem Vortrag sogar ausdrücklich berief, desgleichen – dort freilich mit anderen Begründungen – von Max Weber." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 154.

<sup>163</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 251.

<sup>164</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 251.

<sup>165</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 154.

<sup>166</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.

<sup>167</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 80.

<sup>168</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 68, footnote 5. In a letter to Sabine and Gerhard Leibholz he explains: "Auf meine Annonce in der hiesigen Zeitung hat sich ein Spanier beworben, mit dem ich jetzt sehr viel zusammenkommen. Ein besonders intelligenter und unglaublich belesener Mann von 27 Jahren, in einem Verlag angestellt, um ausländische Werke zu lesen, die sich lohnen, ins Spanische zu übersetzen. Er hat im Gegensatz zu vielen Spaniern sehr gute Manieren, und ist wirklich ausnahmslos sympathisch und gebildet. Er hat einen viel größeren Wortschatz als ich, aber ich spreche geläufiger, so daß ich viel profitiere. Peinlich ist nur, daß er nach spanischer Manier dann alles zahlen will. Gestern brachte er mir ein hübsches Buch über spanische Volksmusik einfach als Geschenk mit, da muß ich sehen, daß ich mich revanchiere. Wir treffen uns zu Hause oder im Kaffee abends um 1/210 Uhr und schwatzen dann so ungefähr 2 Stunden. Heute abend kommt er zu mir. Ich bin mit diesem Griff wirklich sehr zufrieden." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 68.

<sup>169</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 81.

<sup>170</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 81.

- 171 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 81.
- 172 Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 25.
- 173 Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.
- 174 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.
- 175 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.
- 176 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.
- 177 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 66.
- 178 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 66.
- 179 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 63.
- 180 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 63.
- 181 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 63.
- 182 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 63.
- 183 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 71.
- 184 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 71.
- 185 Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 64.
- 186 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.
- 187 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 57. It has been pointed out in this respect, that Bonhoeffer is underrating the Muslim presence in Spain, which lasted over 700 years Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 57, footnote 3.
- 188 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 53-54.
- 189 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 57-58.
- 190 Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.
- 191 DBW 10: 58}
- 192 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 57-58.
- 193 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 57-58.
- 194 Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, 196.
- 195 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 58.
- 196 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 57.
- 197 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 58.
- 198 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.
- 199 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 83.
- 200 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 83.
- 201 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 25. See also Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 34.
- 202 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 40.
- 203 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 40.
- 204 The commentators explain: "Fronleichnam wurde im 13. Jh. als liturgische Feier des Transsubstantiationsdogmas eingeführt und wird seither am Donnerstag nach Trinitatis als 'Hochfest des Leibes und Blutes Christi' gefeiert; von allen reformatorischen Kirchen abgelehnt." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 63, footnote 2.
- 205 Bonhoeffer writes to his parents: "Es war schon Dämmerungszeit. Da bot sich ein wirklich selten schöner Anblick, ein Bild, wie man es sich aus der Zeit vor 500 Jahren denkt: Auf dem Domplatz zur Linken war die ganze Schar der Domchorknaben in ihren purpurroten Kleidern aufgestellt, an sie schloß sich zur Mitte hin Infanterie und Kavallerie an, in alten bunte Uniformen mit großen fantastischen, ritterlich-kriegerisch anmutenden Helmen, und von rechts zogen fackeltragende Priester, Mönche und Kollegiatsschüler in ihren weißen leuchtenden Gewändern durch das mächtige Hauptportal des Domes und in dieser einzigen Beleuchtung durch die Fackeln bekam das ganze Bild ein ganz wunderbares Leben." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 62-63.
- 206 Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 62.

- <sup>207</sup> Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1994), 22.
- <sup>208</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 62.
- <sup>209</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 62.
- <sup>210</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 19.
- <sup>211</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 83.
- <sup>212</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 84.
- <sup>213</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 273.
- <sup>214</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 273.
- <sup>215</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 273.
- <sup>216</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 135.
- <sup>217</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 135.
- <sup>218</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 50.
- <sup>219</sup> Bonhoeffer notes: "Über das Sensationell-Grausame sieht man doch bei jedem Stier schneller hinweg-das mag ja eine 'Verrohung' sein, läßt einen aber doch dem Wesen der Sache näher kommen und mehr Verständnis entgegenbringen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 50.
- <sup>220</sup> Bonhoeffer explains to his parents: "Das Moment der Grausamkeit spielt doch nur eine geringe Rolle, zumal im vergangenen Stierkampf zum ersten Mal die Pferde Bauchschutz hatten, sodaß die entsetzlichen Bilder aus meiner ersten Corrida fehlten. Interessant ist doch, daß es einen langen Kampf gekostet hat, ehe man durchsetzte, den Pferden diesen Bauchschutz zu geben. Es ist eben wohl doch die Mehrzahl der Zuschauer, die einfach Blut und Grausamkeit sehen will." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 48.
- <sup>221</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 48.
- <sup>222</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 23.
- <sup>223</sup> Staats, "Nachwort," 609.
- <sup>224</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 48.
- <sup>225</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 48.
- <sup>226</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 23.
- <sup>227</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 50. Bonhoeffer continues to observe: "Der Augenblickscharakter der Massenstimmung geht so weit, daß dem Stier gegen den Torero applaudiert wird, wenn etwa der letztere feig sein sollte und ihm-was man ja eigentlich verstehen kann-auch nur für einen Augenblick die Courage entfällt." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 50-51.
- <sup>228</sup> Alois Hahn, "Soziologie Des Fremden," in *Erfahrungen Des Fremden*, ed. Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg (Heidelberg: Heidelberg Verlag, 1993), 30.
- <sup>229</sup> I follow the Spanish spelling "Don Quijote" with the exception of the different spellings in quotations.
- <sup>230</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 26.
- <sup>231</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 134.
- <sup>232</sup> Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Introduction," in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, Critical Views (London: Reaction Books, 1999), 45.
- <sup>233</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 134. Recommending several books to his fiancée Bonhoeffer writes to Maria from prison: "Ob Dir der von mir so geliebte Don Quijote wohl etwas bedeuten kann?" Ruth-Alice Von Bismarck and Ulrich Kabitz, eds, *Braubriefe Zelle 92: 1943-1945* (München: C.H. Beck, 1993), 139.
- <sup>234</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 804.
- <sup>235</sup> Heiner Süsselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," *Bonhoeffer Rundbrief* 54 (November 1997): 35.
- <sup>236</sup> Süsselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 35. Süsselbeck continues to explain: "Das Hochhalten einer formal erstarrten Gesinnungsethik diente einer menschenverachtenden Kriegsführung und war zum Handlanger rassistischer Ideologie geworden. Auch die Verantwortlichen einer Kirche, die bei den bestehenden Konflikten bemüht blieben, im Dienst am Guten als einem Selbstzweck sich untadelig zu halten, lebten in der Lächerlichkeit des hier von Cervantes beklagten 'Quijotismo'." Süsselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 35.
- <sup>237</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Ilse Tödt, et al., vol. 6 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1992), 35.
- <sup>238</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, 66.
- <sup>239</sup> Bonhoeffer observes: "Die Vernunft, der ethische Fanatismus, das Gewissen, die Pflicht, die freie Verantwortung, die stille Tugend sind Güter und Haltungen hohen Menschentums. Es sind die Besten,

die so mit allem was sie können und sind, untergehen. Die unvergängliche Gestalt des Don Quijote, des "Ritters von der traurigen Gestalt", der ein Rasierbecken für einen Helm und einen elenden Klepper für ein Streitross nimmt, der für die erwählte Gebieterin seines Herzens, die garnicht existiert, in unablässigen Kampf zieht, wird gegenwärtig. So sieht das abenteuerliche Unternehmen einer alten gegen eine neue Welt, einer vergangenen gegen eine gegenwärtige Wirklichkeit, eines edlen Phantasten gegen die Übermacht des Gewöhnlichen aus." Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, 66. But Bonhoeffer cautions his readers of any disrespectful and arrogant attitude towards these thinkers of the "old world" whose "armour" does not fit the new battles that have to be fought.. It is the second part of the novel, written 10 years later after the first part which is seen to exhibit such negative attitude which lacks the empathy and compassion for the tragic hero: "Auch der tiefe Bruch, der zwischen den zwei Teilen der großen Erzählung liegt, ist insofern charakteristisch, als sich der Erzähler im zweiten Teil, der erst nach vielen Jahren dem ersten folgte, gegen seinen Helden auf die Seite der lachenden, gemeinen Welt schlägt. Zu billig ist es, die Waffen zu schmähen, die wir von unseren Vätern erbten, mit denen sie große Dinge vollbrachten, die aber dem gegenwärtigen Kampf nicht mehr genügen können. Nur der Gemeine kann das Schicksal des Don Quijote ohne Teilnahme und Rührung lesen." Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, 66-67.

<sup>240</sup> Bonhoeffer's critique is not without sentiments of sympathy for Don Quijote which resurfaces in his novel from prison. For the novel's character "Christoph" who displays strong autobiographical features represents "den Edelmut des Don Quijote and sieht ihn im Gegensatz zum Pragmatismus Sancho Pansas, seines ihm angepassten Dieners" Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 37. At the same time Bonhoeffer's critique of Don Quijote's ineffective "Waffen eines leidesbereiten, opferwilligen und prinzipientreuen Heldentums" is positively contrasted with Don Quijote's companion Sancho Pansa and his particular pragmatism. Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 37. Expanding on Bonhoeffer's remark that "Klug ist, wer die Wirklichkeit sieht, wie sie ist" Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, 38. Stüselbeck interprets this cleverness as the ability "die rostigen Waffen (Don Quijote) mit den blanken Waffen (Sancho Pansa) zu vertauschen." Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 36. One can therefore argue that to Bonhoeffer ethics meant "die Einfalt Don Quijotes mit der Klugheit Sancho Pansas zu versöhnen" Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 36.

<sup>241</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 333.

<sup>242</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 333. Bonhoeffer goes on to explain the difficult tension: "Ich glaube, wir müssen das Große und Eigene wirklich unternehmen und doch zugleich das selbstverständliche – und allgemein – Notwendige tun, wir müssen dem "Schicksal" – ich finde das "Neutrum" dieses Begriffes wichtig – ebenso entschlossen entgegentreten wie uns ihm zu gegebener Zeit unterwerfen. Von "Führung" kann man erst *jenseits* dieses zwiefachen Vorgangs sprechen, Gott begegnet uns nicht nur als Du, sondern auch "vermummt" im "Es", und in meiner Frage geht es also im Grunde darum, wie wir in diesem "Est" ("Schicksal") das "Du" finden, oder m.a.W. ... wie aus dem "Schicksal" wirklich "Führung" wird. Die Grenze zwischen Widerstand und Ergebung ist also prinzipiell nicht zu bestimmen; aber es muß beides da sein und beides mit Entschlossenheit ergriffen werden. Der Glaube fordert dieses bewegliche, lebendige Handeln. Nur so können wir uns[ere] jeweils gegenwärtige Situation durchhalten und fruchtbar machen. Ob sich hier Unterschiede zwischen theologischer und juristischer Existenz zeigen? Ich denke dabei z.B. an den extremen Gegensatz zwischen Klaus und Rüdiger innerhalb der gesetzlich"- juristischen Haltung [...] – auf der anderen Seite unsere beweglichere, lebendigere, weil letztlich wirklichkeitsgemäßere "theologische" Haltung." Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, 333-34.

<sup>243</sup> Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 43-44.

<sup>244</sup> Bethge in Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 44..

<sup>245</sup> Drawing on Bethge's insights Stüselbeck explains: "Allein für sich genommen steht das Vorbild des Don Quijote in der Gefahr, daß es mit 'seinen noch so engagierten Aktionen die Wirklichkeit wie das gemeinte Böse gar nicht mehr trifft.' Bonhoeffer wußte demgegenüber 'von dem Risiko, das keine Prinzipientreue aus der Welt schafft', darum sprach er 'vom <beweglichen, lebendigen Handeln> des Glaubens.' Die Haltung Sancho Pansas aber wird, wenn sie einseitig isoliert praktiziert wird, 'zu einem Stück des Bösen selbst, sie endet in [...] Komplizenschaft und erreicht gerade das nicht, was sie vielleicht zu Anfang wollte: die Abstinenz vom Bösen. Stattdessen endet ihr Zulassen in unverzeihlicher Schuld.' Das heißt: der Sancho Pansa und der Don Quijote bleiben in uns aufeinander angewiesen, wenn sich der Glaube mit der bestehenden Realität weiter auseinandersetzen will – eine Einsicht, die sich vor den vielen Standbildern meditieren läßt, bei denen Don Quijote und Sancho Pansa gemeinsam dargestellt werden." Stüselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 44.

<sup>246</sup> Bonhoeffer argues: "Klug ist, wer die Wirklichkeit sieht, wie sie ist, wer auf den Grund der Dinge sieht. Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit ist nicht dasselbe wie Kenntnis der äußeren Vorgänge, sondern das Erschauen des Wesens der Dinge. Nicht der Bestinformierte ist der Klügste. Gerade er steht in Gefahr über dem Vielerlei das Wesentliche zu verkennen. Andererseits vermittelt oftmals die Kenntnis einer scheinbar geringfügigen Einzelheit den Blick in die Tiefe der Dinge. So wird der Kluge sich das bestmögliche Wissen um die Vorgänge zu verschaffen suchen, ohne doch davon abhängig zu werden. In dem Tatsächlichen das Bezeichnende zu erkennen ist Klugheit. Der Kluge kennt die begrenzte Empfänglichkeit der Wirklichkeit für Prinzipien; denn er weiß, daß die Wirklichkeit nicht auf Prinzipien aufgebaut ist, sondern in dem lebendigen schaffenden Gott ruht. So weiß er auch, daß der Wirklichkeit nicht mit den reinsten Prinzipien, aber auch nicht mit dem besten Wollen zu helfen ist, sondern nur mit dem lebendigen Gott. Prinzipien sind nur Werkzeuge in der Hand Gottes, die bald als untauglich weggeworfen werden. Der befreite Blick auf Gott und auf die Wirklichkeit, wie sie in Gott allein Bestand hat, vereint Einfalt und Klugheit. Es gibt keine rechte Einfalt ohne Klugheit und keine Klugheit ohne Einfalt." Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, 68. Süsselbeck comments in this respect: "Für Bonhoeffer war ein verantwortliches Christsein (und damit die Bemühung um effektiven Widerstand) in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus durch eine einseitige Akzentuierung im Sinne von Sancho Pansa oder Don Quijote nicht möglich. Mit einfachen 'Entweder-Oder'-Lösungen war in den Anfechtungen dieser Zeit niemand gedient." Süsselbeck, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Don Quijote," 38.

<sup>247</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 27.

<sup>248</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 27-28.

<sup>249</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 629.

<sup>250</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 629-30.

<sup>251</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 630.

<sup>252</sup> Staat notes about the book published in 1927: "Wittig, ein wegen seines "Modernismus" zeitweilig von der römischen Kurie verurteilter Patristiker und katholischer Schriftsteller, gibt in diesem Buch ein modernes Beispiel der Nachfolge Jesu." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 630.

<sup>253</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 27-28. Bonhoeffer's appreciation of the book is also found in a letter to his parents. Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 39.

<sup>254</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 630.

<sup>255</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 330..

<sup>256</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 28.

<sup>257</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 455 and 460.

<sup>258</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 144.

<sup>259</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 144.



## 5. AMERICA

### *Introduction*

Bonhoeffer's two trips to the United States in 1930/31 and 1939 represented, according to Ruth Zerner, "milestones in Bonhoeffer's odyssey."<sup>1</sup> But it is especially the first trip which is deemed to have produced "the most significant alterations in his life style ..."<sup>2</sup> This was closely bound up with a new perception of and attitude towards European culture: "The *Gebildete*, who at first did not know what he was doing in the United States (he originally wanted to go to the East rather than the West), the *Kultur*-expert who crossed the Atlantic to teach rather than to learn (he lectured on dialectical theology to an American audience), returned a different man."<sup>3</sup> Bonhoeffer was hopeful of visiting the Far East as well as the West, which, according to Bethge, added to his joyous expectancy and sense of uncertainty, but it became his experiences of the West, which proved to be so significant for his personal and professional formation.<sup>4</sup> Bethge maintains: "Im Familienerbe kaum angelegt, von ihm selbst nur zögernd ergriffen, hat diese Wendung sein Leben nachhaltiger als andere Reiseziele seiner Jugend geprägt und Freunde finden lassen, die ihn und sein Urteil für immer verpflichteten."<sup>5</sup> This seemingly led to a perplexing curiosity in Bonhoeffer's life: "Bonhoeffer wünschte und betrieb jahrelang die Ausweitung seiner Welterfahrung nach dem Orient hin. Er empfing sie stattdessen vom Occident her."<sup>6</sup> In this sense Zerner is right when she explains that "Geographically America shaped the outer edge of Bonhoeffer's youthful 'grand tour.'"<sup>7</sup> The circumstances of Bonhoeffer's departure are poignantly captured by Bethge, highlighting the profound sense of freedom Bonhoeffer must have felt at this particular time:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer fuhr in sein letztes Jahr ungebundenen Lernens. Den Forderungen für eine berufliche Laufbahn sowohl auf akademischen wie auf kirchlichem Gebiet war mit glänzenden Resultaten Genüge getan. Weder dem Katheder noch der Kanzel hatte er sich endgültig verpflichtet. Nie vorher und nie nachher ist er so frei gewesen: das Nötigste war geleistet, und alle Wege standen offen.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the usual letters written to and from Bonhoeffer, his various seminar papers and occasional sermons, our analysis of his American journey is augmented by two reports written during his first trip and an essay written after his second trip. Even though our study focuses on Bonhoeffer's early travel writings, we will also consider his essay on "Protestantismus ohne Reformation" - written in August 1939 after his return from his second trip to the United States - for any new insights. Given the brevity of his second stay the reflections and observations made in the essay derived from his first trip. Of primary interest will be the hermeneutical reflections on encounter made both in the latter essay and in the second report of the first trip. They will have to be engaged with the following reading of Bonhoeffer's "Fremderfahrungen" in the light of Schäffter's four "modi der Fremderfahrung". Once again I will attempt to explore the connection between his encounters with the American and the Afro-American "other" and his turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen".

### *The American and Afro-American "Other"*

According to Bethge, it was in late 1929 that Bonhoeffer began thinking of spending a year in the United States. England was first debated, but the States finally became the first choice.<sup>9</sup> Bonhoeffer's initial reservations and strong hesitancy about his sojourn are clearly reflected in the preparatory phase of planning and finalizing the trip. Bonhoeffer's ambition to travel to America was dampened by some unease and suspicion: "Sollte er, zum Studenten degradiert, an irgendeinen beliebigen ihm zugewiesenen Platz ein Jahr verschenken? Er hörte etwas von 'Textbuchmethoden'; amerikanische Theologie hielt er eigentlich für nicht existent."<sup>10</sup> While Diestel is said to have motivated this trip for ecumenical reasons,<sup>11</sup> Bonhoeffer's own intentions were geared towards "neuartige[n] Studien und neue[n] Welterfahrung."<sup>12</sup> In early May a place was secured for him at Union Theological Seminary.<sup>13</sup> He carefully prepared himself for this trip, concentrating on language skills as well as political and theological issues.<sup>14</sup> Bethge draws our attention to a booklet in which Bonhoeffer recorded American idioms.<sup>15</sup> There one also finds the following spicy comments made in 1917 by Elihu Root, Secretary of State: "The Germans are only half civilized in all that makes civilization. Germany has the abnormal instincts that characterize

her barbarisms and separate her from any civilized people. She has the intolerance, the incapacity to realize the right of existence of others ..."<sup>16</sup> According to Bethge this polemical characterization was soon forgotten when Bonhoeffer noticed, "wieviel mehr das Kriegsgeschrei unter amerikanischen Christen verstummt war als im eigenen Land."<sup>17</sup> In fact Bonhoeffer's own first hand experiences were to positively surprise him, "daß der Abbau alter Vorurteile in Amerika schon viel weiter vorangeschritten war, als er zuvor angenommen hatte."<sup>18</sup> He therefore felt free to raise the issue of the Treaty of Versailles and its repercussions, especially in his speeches to the American youth.<sup>19</sup> And as critical as Bonhoeffer's report of the seminar's theological scene would be, theologically the times also signaled a new opening. John Baillie's "Festvortrag" from 1956 identified "a new situation"<sup>20</sup> around the winter of 1930/31 when the impact of the Barthian movement was first felt in America.<sup>21</sup>

All in all Bethge therefore maintains that Bonhoeffer had come at the right moment to the right place.<sup>22</sup> And yet, as the examples above indicate, on both sides the climate was characterized more by suspicion and prejudice than by trust and openness. It is therefore not surprising that Bonhoeffer should lament to his sister Sabine Leibholz about the burden of having to take on the role of an advocate and spokesperson for Germany.<sup>23</sup> From early on, then, he acknowledges his particular role of mediator and "Grenzgänger". But it is also his American sojourn that in a unique way sparked off comments by friends and teachers about how Bonhoeffer himself was perceived by others illustrating the kind of "wechselseitige, sich gegenseitig hervorrufende Fremdheit" which Schäffter discusses within his fourth *modus* of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität".<sup>24</sup> Bonhoeffer himself, as his close American friend Paul Lehmann contends, in many ways fulfilled the American stereotype of German aristocracy. For he appeared to be "German in his passion for perfection, whether of manners, or performance, or of all that is connoted by the word Kultur. Here, in short, was an aristocracy of the spirit at its best."<sup>25</sup> And yet, Lehmann also concedes having detected character traits that did not seem to fit the traditional perception of Germans. Bonhoeffer's "boundless curiosity" about everything new and different, for example, led to "the capacity to see oneself and the world from a perspective other than one's own."<sup>26</sup>

Such change of perspective resonates with Schöffter's description of genuine encounter as an experience of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität". It is characterized as a process whereby "die Fixierung auf einen internen Standpunkt" is exchanged for a dialogical acknowledgment of mutual difference enabling a genuine "Grenzerfahrung".<sup>27</sup> Lehmann hence contends that this "paradox of birth and nationality in Bonhoeffer ... have made him an exciting and conspicuous example of the triumph over parochialism of every kind."<sup>28</sup> The following analysis of Bonhoeffer's "Fremderfahrungen" in America will have to verify Lehmann's unconditional judgment. What will become evident is the importance of the friendships formed during this stay and their influential role in mediating difference and otherness.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Zerner maintains that "the paradigm for Bonhoeffer's friendships", which had its prelude in the friendship with Franz Hildebrandt, began to unfold during his first American stay illustrating what Thomas Day described as Bonhoeffer's "need for others in order to live, to think, to decide."<sup>30</sup> Interestingly Zerner describes the four close friends of Bonhoeffer during his stay in America - Paul Lehmann, Erwin Sutz, Jean Lasserre and Franklin Fisher - as manifesting "an authentic concern for linking Christian life and ideas."<sup>31</sup> It beautifully illustrates not only the connection Bonhoeffer makes himself about his early "Fremderfahrungen" and his turning "zum Wirklichen", but it also supports Schöffter's argument for "wechselseitige Interaktion" at a more personal level in order to safeguard genuine encounter with the reality of the "other".<sup>32</sup>

Our analysis follows Bonhoeffer's "Studienbericht für das Kirchenbundesamt"<sup>33</sup>, which mirrors his attempt to order and evaluate the main impressions made during the first semester of his stay.<sup>34</sup> Following the order of this account we will examine Bonhoeffer's "Fremderfahrungen" including further comments made in the correspondence of this period in the relation to the question of "Wirklichkeitsnähe".

### 1. Living and Studying at Union Theological Seminary

Bonhoeffer begins his report with a brief sketch of Union Theological Seminary which, as Bethge points out, enjoyed the height of its reputation standing for interdenominational openness and representing "den 'berühmten wie verehrten Hort

der Kritik' an politischem, sozialem und kirchlichem Konservatismus."<sup>35</sup> Being also involved in ecumenical work and made up of a range of influential academics Union became a popular destination for European scholars.<sup>36</sup> Bonhoeffer enrolled at Union as a candidate of the "Sloane-Fellowship".<sup>37</sup> From the beginning he was aware of the extent to which his perceptions of the United States were mediated by Union's ideological standpoint: "Als Stipendiat am Union Theological Seminary in New York in die kirchlichen und theologischen Verhältnisse der Vereinigten Staaten eingeführt zu werden hat alle Vorteile und Nachteile, die dem Ausländer daraus erwachsen, daß er ein fremdes Land von dem Orte der schärfsten Kritik aus sehen lernt."<sup>38</sup> Bonhoeffer's major concern in this respect is the extent to which this radical critique of political, social and economical issues as well as theological and ecclesiological conservatism leads to what he describes as "stetiger Zersetzungsprozeß, den das Durchsickern pragmatischer Philosophie auf die christliche Theologie herbeiführt."<sup>39</sup> His "surveillance" of the theological scene conveys a sense of mastery over what is perceived to be outdated philosophy of religion and a lack of genuine theological reasoning.<sup>40</sup> His perception is, of course, highly influenced by his categorical loyalty to Barth. And yet, the critical standpoint this position imposed did not prevent him from studying the presuppositions of what he heard in the seminars. It reflected an awareness of what he did not understand expressing his sincere intention to see, in Lehmann's words, "from a perspective other than one's own ..." Bonhoeffer refrained from making polemical generalizations, quite in contrast to Wilhelm Lütgert who expressed to Bonhoeffer in rather stereotypical manner: "Die Amerikaner sind naiv genug, sich eine Theologie und eine Philosophie für ihre Zwecke zu bestellen, wie man sich ein Auto in der Fabrik bestellt."<sup>41</sup> The patience and willingness to listen and understand, however, was not always reciprocated by his classmates. At one point Bonhoeffer discloses his frustration when he confides: "Es geht mir oft innerlich durch und durch, wenn man hier im Kolleg Christus erledigt und unverfroren lacht, wenn ein Zitat von Luther über Sündenbewußtsein gegeben wird."<sup>42</sup>

Bonhoeffer talks very positively about college life and the possibility of meeting people of so many different countries, even though he is not terribly impressed by the level of sophistication surfacing in the conversations.<sup>43</sup> It is among the black and East-Asian students that he makes his most interesting contacts.<sup>44</sup> College life's lack of

privacy was something unfamiliar and demanded quite an adjustment from Bonhoeffer's side.<sup>45</sup> And yet, to experience such a life in the dormitory was recognized as an important part of understanding student life in the States: "Das tägliche Zusammenleben erzeugt einen starken Geist der Kameradschaft, der gegenseitigen Hilfsbereitschaft."<sup>46</sup> And it is within this context that what by outsiders might be considered an empty phrase is filled with real meaning and sense: "Das tausendfache 'hallo', das im Laufe des Tages durch die Gänge des dormitory klingt, und das man selbst beim eiligen Aneinandervorbeilaufen nicht unterläßt, ist nicht so nichtssagend wie man glauben möchte."<sup>47</sup> This solidarity and openness shaped the atmosphere in the seminar which is described by Bonhoeffer as "ein Ort der freien Aussprache jedes mit jedem, die durch die dem Amerikaner eignende Civilcourage und durch das Fehlen jeder hemmenden Amtlichkeit im persönlichen Umgang ermöglicht wird."<sup>48</sup> Staying and living together in the dormitory hence provided Bonhoeffer with an important change of perspective and the discovery of a real sense of concern for the "other" in what has been described by outsiders as mere "phraseology".

But Bonhoeffer also notices a down side to this phenomenon that is understood to be characteristic of an American way of thinking: "beim Konflikt zwischen der Entschlossenheit zur Wahrheit in allen ihren Konsequenzen und dem Willen zur Gemeinschaft siegt der letzte."<sup>49</sup> While Bonhoeffer recognizes the pedagogical virtues deriving from such an emphasis on the spirit of fairness he also indicates its problematic effects in terms of a certain "Nivellierung in geistigen Ansprüchen und Leistungen."<sup>50</sup> In comparison to it the German university system and the more secluded life style of its students is seen to encourage a more critical and individual formation. Bonhoeffer misses elements of "geistige Konkurrenz" and "geistigen Ehrgeiz."<sup>51</sup> This lack of competition and ambition gives the seminar the character of being "mehr ein freundschaftlicher Meinungs Austausch als ein Arbeiten an der Erkenntnis."<sup>52</sup> Considering other factors that might have contributed to this Bonhoeffer suggests: "Die Vorbildung zum Seminary in Highschool und College lehrt den Studenten zwar sehr vielerlei, aber eines nicht, nämlich selbständig arbeiten. Die textbook-methode und die völlige wissenschaftliche Bevormundung durch den Professor hat verheerende Folgen."<sup>53</sup> He is especially alerted to the unease of many

students in the seminar on dogmatics and how it is possible at Union “ohne je Dogmatik gehört zu haben ins Pfarramt zu gehen.”<sup>54</sup> It is in a personal letter to Max Diestel that Bonhoeffer therefore delivers a very critical assessment of the level of theological education experienced at Union. The critique is devastating. It conveys a perception of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” and illustrates well the degree to which Bonhoeffer is deeply rooted in his own theological upbringing:

Eine Theologie gibt es hier nicht. Ich habe im wesentlichen dogmatische und religionsphilosophische Seminare und Kollegs, aber der Eindruck bleibt vernichtend. Es wird das Blaue vom Himmel heruntergeschwatzet ohne die geringste sachliche Begründung und ohne daß irgendwelche Kriterien sichtbar werden. Die Studenten - durchschnittlich 25-30 Jahre alt - sind restlos ahnungslos, worum es eigentlich in der Dogmatik geht. Sie kennen nicht die einfachsten Fragestellungen. Man berauscht [sich] an liberalen und humanistischen Redensarten, belächelt die Fundamentalisten und ist ihnen im Grund nicht einmal gewachsen. Man interessiert sich für Barth und macht ab und zu auch ein wenig “in Pessimismus”. Das ist dann ganz schlimm. Im Gegensatz zu unserem Liberalismus, der doch ganz zweifellos eine durchaus kräftige Erscheinung in seinen guten Vertretern war, ist hier drüben das alles so schauerlich sentimentalisiert und dabei mit einer geradezu naiven Recht-haberei. ... Die James'sche Weisheit vom endlichen Gott steckt tief in den meisten Theologen und Pastorenköpfen drin. Sie finden das tiefsinnig und modern und spüren garnicht den frechen Leichtsinn in all diesem Gerede.<sup>55</sup>

It is hence only by way of negative contrast that Bonhoeffer remains appreciative of the experiences made at Union when he acknowledges in the same letter: “Trotz allem empfinde ich es dankbar, noch einmal ganz in diese Grundfragen hineingeführt worden zu sein. Tatsächlich weiß man hier wieder, was wichtige Fragen sind und was man unserer Theologie zu verdanken hat.”<sup>56</sup> Bonhoeffer’s evaluation hence discloses a Eurocentrism that is not yet fully conscious of the degree to which its judgment displays a very one-sided perspective. For according to Schäffter it is only when we become aware of our own perspectivity, “können wir dann das Fremde als *Fremdes* belassen.”<sup>57</sup> His judgment on the situation in the churches is no less critical: “Nicht wesentlich verschieden sind die Zustände in der Kirche. Die Predigt ist herabgewürdigt zu kirchlichen Randbemerkungen zu Zeitereignissen. Ich habe,

solange ich hier bin, *eine* Predigt gehört, in der man so etwas wie eine Verkündigung hören konnte, und die war von einem Neger gehalten (wie ich überhaupt in den Negern mehr und mehr eine große religiöse Kraft und Ursprünglichkeit entdecke).<sup>58</sup> These experiences raise some difficult and unsettling questions. For Bonhoeffer wonders “ob man hier eigentlich noch von Christlichkeit reden kann und wo dann das Kriterium liegt. Es hat doch keinen Sinn dort, wo das Wort wirklich nicht mehr gepredigt wird, noch Früchte zu erwarten. Wo aber wäre dann überhaupt noch Christlichkeit? Es kann doch nicht letzten Endes auf die Theologie ankommen?”<sup>59</sup>

But he does also notice an area in which the American student has a great advantage in comparison to the German, introducing an aspect of “Fremdheit als Ergänzung”. It is seen to emanate from a strong emphasis on the practical side of the ministry and the call for involvement in areas of social, economic, and political concern. He describes the American student as someone whose life style reveals a greater sense of “Wirklichkeitsnähe”: “In den Ferien geht er praktisch arbeiten und lernt Leute und Verhältnisse kennen. Das gibt seinem wissenschaftlichen Denken eine gewisse praktische Abzielung, die unsern Seminaren fremd ist ...”<sup>60</sup> And yet, once again, Bonhoeffer qualifies his positive observation, because of a rather one-sided interpretation of practical involvement in terms of social needs disregarding the question of truth. It is perceived to have immediate consequences for the style of preaching: “Weil der amerikanische Student die Wahrheitsfrage wesentlich im Lichte der praktischen Gemeinschaft sieht, wird sein Predigen zur erbaulichen Beispielerzählung, zur bereitwilligen Kundgabe eigener religiöser Erfahrungen, denen natürlich irgendein sachlich bindender Charakter nicht zugesprochen wird.”<sup>61</sup> Not without some cynicism Bonhoeffer therefore closes this passage on the students at Union on the following note: “Dienen dem deutschen Studenten die ersten Predigten dazu, um seine Dogmatik so schnell wie möglich weiterzugeben, so dem Amerikaner, um seine gesamte bisherige religious experience vor der Gemeinde auszubreiten.”<sup>62</sup>

The record of seminars attended and the content of Bonhoeffer's papers reflect an intense and serious engagement with the philosophical-theological thinking and the socio-political issues of the time.<sup>63</sup> In describing what he introduces as “Der



theologische Geist des Union Theological Seminary”<sup>64</sup> Bonhoeffer divides the body of lecturers - and accordingly the student body - into three separate groups.<sup>65</sup> His classifications should be read as an attempt of ordering and “taming” the diversity of experiences made in order to exact some kind of control. It thereby displays elements of both “Fremdheit als Gegenbild” and “Fremdheit als Ergänzung” He finds the first group to be the liveliest, characterized by a serious theoretical and practical engagement with economical and political issues based on progressive surveys. His Barthian reservations aside, Bonhoeffer shows great appreciation for the way in which “der frühe Niebuhr Abhängigkeiten auf ethischem Gebiet, die ‘ethical resources and limitations of religious authoritarianisms’, die zweifelhaften Folgen eines religiösen Institutionalismus oder den Individualismus bloßstellte (‘Luther stood for religious individualism, Calvin stood for ethical individualism’).”<sup>66</sup> He especially praises the sacrifice of time and money involved in this group’s participation at various organizations.<sup>67</sup> But he bemoans what is referred to by them as “ethical interpretation”, for it is seen to naively dismiss and belittle theological questions.<sup>68</sup>

Conversely, the second group’s commitment to finding a theology for the congregation is positively acknowledged. There he observes a moving between “Liberalismus und ‘Buchmanismus’ (Oxford-Perfektionismus).”<sup>69</sup> It is Baillie’s theological positioning between Ritschl, Hermann and the Scottish tradition which is perceived to be the guiding idea. But once again Bonhoeffer’s critique is cutting, this time questioning a certain “aufklärerischen Rationalismus.”<sup>70</sup> Baillie himself, of course, was very open to Bonhoeffer’s theological approach and invited Bonhoeffer to give a thorough lecture on Barth.<sup>71</sup> Bonhoeffer’s presentation on “The theology of crisis and its attitude toward philosophy and science”<sup>72</sup> turned the seminar into a veritable battleground leaving everyone with the impression that Bonhoeffer was a truly loyal Barthian.<sup>73</sup> His opening statement reveals the enormous divide he perceives between Barth’s approach and the theological outlook he experiences at Union.

Coming after half a year of consideration of the problem of the relation between cosmology, philosophy and theology, to a man like K[arl] Barth I confess that I do not see any other possible way for you to get into real contact with his thought, than by

forgetting at least for this one hour everything you have learned before concerning this problem.<sup>74</sup>

It portrays a desperate call to not judge prematurely on the basis of one's own presuppositions, but to hear the alien claim. It is hence in the name of Barth's *totaliter aliter* that Bonhoeffer attempts to generate a genuine "Grenzerfahrung". He thereby becomes an advocate for a theologically informed suspicion of interpretation that resonates with the difficulty of resisting representations of the cultural "other" as "Gegenbild" or "Ergänzung". Bonhoeffer argues in this respect: "It is in the last analysis the great antithesis of the word of God and the word of man, of grace and religion, of a pure christian category and general religious category, of reality and interpretation."<sup>75</sup> This theologically informed suspicion of representation is seen to represent a radical critique of idealism and evolves around the problem of a genuine boundary: "There are no limits for the ego, its power and its claim is boundless, it is its own standard. Here all transcendence is pulled into the circle of the creative ego ..."<sup>76</sup> And even though Kantian philosophy is recognized in its critique of both realism and idealism, it is also described "as the attempt of man to set himself the limits in order to avoid the boundlessness of his claim ..."<sup>77</sup> The problem with this approach is of course once again that "thinking never can limit itself; in limiting itself it establishes itself. Thinking as such is boundless, it pulls transcendent reality into its circle."<sup>78</sup> It is hence E. Grisebach's personalistic approach which is recognized to see "that thinking as essentially systematic thinking does violence to reality in pulling it into the circle of the egocentricity."<sup>79</sup> And yet, even with Grisebach "thinking remains dominant and constitutive of the world of reality. For the limits of thinking is thought limit."<sup>80</sup> The only solution to this inevitable thinking in circles characteristic of all philosophy is seen to be Barth's theology of revelation building on the Reformers' insights on the "cor curvum in se ..."<sup>81</sup> The solution expresses itself in the Christian message that "entirely from outside of the world of sin God himself came in Jesus Christ, he breaks as the holy Ghost into the circle of man, not as a new idea, a new value by virtue of which man could save himself, but in the concreteness as judgement and forgiveness of sin, as the promise of eschatological salvation."<sup>82</sup> Bonhoeffer hence concludes with what he describes as the "deepest antinomy",

the antinomy between pure act and reflection as the old dogmaticians said: *actus directus* and *reflexus*. God is known only in pure act of referring to God, theology and philosophy are executed in reflection, which God does not enter. Philosophy essentially remains in reflection, man knows himself and God only in reflection, theology at least knows of an act of God, which tears man out of his reflection into an *actus directus* toward God. Here man knows himself and God not by looking into himself, but by looking to the word of God, which tells him that he is sinner and justified, which he never before could understand.<sup>83</sup>

Writing to Max Diestel towards the end of his stay Bonhoeffer expressed great frustration about not being understood: "Das Interesse für K. Barth ist hier sehr lebhaft, obwohl man völlig verständnislos bleibt; wiederum eine Sekte mehr! Das ist so die Auffassung!"<sup>84</sup> And yet, Bonhoeffer did find supportive allies in his friends Paul Lehmann and Erwin Sutz.<sup>85</sup>

But both Baillie and Niebuhr also challenged Bonhoeffer in his theological approach and detected a dangerous lack of "Wirklichkeitsnähe". Baillie especially critiqued "den Graben, den Bonhoeffer zwischen Denken (im idealistischen Sinn) und Realität aufriß; so etwas mußte ihm konstruiert und radikalisiert vorkommen."<sup>86</sup> Niebuhr continuously questioned Bonhoeffer's seemingly apolitical approach and pushed him to consider the ethical dimension of his dogmatic statements: "Obedience to God's will may be a religious experience, but it is not an ethical one until it issues in actions which can be socially valued. Any other interpretation of 'ethical' than one which measures an action in terms of consequences and judges actions purely in terms of notions, empties the ethical of content and makes it purely formal."<sup>87</sup> Even though Bonhoeffer is to continue to maintain the "Priorität der richtigen Voraussetzungen, die unabhängig bleiben müßten vom voreiligen Interesse an ihren ethischen Wirksamkeiten" Bethge recognizes a clear influence on what was already one of Bonhoeffer's life long concerns around this time: "Was es mit der ethischen Konkretheit der Offenbarung auf sich habe, diese Frage hat Bonhoeffer zu der Zeit schon durchaus in heimliche Unruhe versetzt ..."<sup>88</sup> And therefore Zerner is right to maintain that "While Bonhoeffer may have resisted inwardly the action-oriented theological critique of these American professors, he respected the intellectual

integrity of both men [Lyman and Niebuhr]. They confronted him with ethical challenges of this-worldly activity, not allowing an easy retreat into the dichotomy between thought and life, between ideas and decisions."<sup>89</sup>

The third group with which Bonhoeffer says came in close contact with is a student class engaging with philosophy of religion. Prof. Eugene W. Lyman is seen to be its major exponent, representing American philosophy in a genuine way. Bonhoeffer is indebted to the way in which regular meetings with Lyman helped him to understand American philosophy and its relationship to theology in the light of recent literature. In fact, it was primarily through the influence of Lyman that Bonhoeffer learned to bridge the gap between thought and action. Modeling humble and exacting scholarship Lyman became for Bonhoeffer "a remarkable respected guide" to the world of American pragmatic, realistic philosophy. Lehmann indicates that from the beginning Bonhoeffer admired Lyman's unpretentious quality of listening and learning. It must have created a genuine experience of "wechselseitiger Fremdheit" enabling "die Anerkennung einer Grenzerfahrung im Sinne einer bedeutungsvollen Einsicht in eine konkrete Grenzlinie eigener Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten."<sup>90</sup> Forcing Bonhoeffer to face the questions raised by realist philosophy, Lyman challenged his rigid separation of the world of ideas from the world of decisions, as well as his compartmentalization of reality and thinking and thereby pushing for more "Wirklichkeitsnähe".<sup>91</sup> But Bonhoeffer's depiction of the courses taken with Lyman reveals some unease: "In seinen Kursen findet der Student Gelegenheit zur Aussprache grösster Ketzerei und intellektueller Schwierigkeiten. Der 'philosophical approach' zieht den Studenten als 'scientific' sehr an. Die Unbekümmertheit, mit der die Studenten hier über Gott und die Welt reden, ist für uns doch zum mindesten sehr überraschend."<sup>92</sup> It is in his seminar paper on "Concerning the Christian idea of God"<sup>93</sup> that Bonhoeffer starts a fundamental critique on this philosophical approach:

... philosophical truth always remains truth which is given only within the category of possibility. Philosophical thinking never can extend beyond this category – it can never be a thinking in reality. It can form a conception of reality, but conceived reality is not reality any longer. The reason for this is that thinking is in itself a closed circle, with the ego as the center.<sup>94</sup>

As a consequence theological thinking is also a construction *a posteriori* and has to be conscious of its limitations: "As thinking per se, it is not excepted from the pretension and boundlessness of all thinking."<sup>95</sup> The main difference is, of course, that theological thinking "knows of its own insufficiency and its limitations. So it must be its highest concern to guard these limitations and to leave room for the reality of God, which can never be conceived by theological thinking."<sup>96</sup>

Bonhoeffer continues to note the great importance attributed to Practical Theology. It is understood to be the litmus test for what is actually learnt after three years of study and for evaluating Union's contribution to the work of the congregation. And yet, with one exception - the influential preacher Harry E. Fosdick - Bonhoeffer is distraught because the actual message of the church does not become an issue at all. Instead organizational and strategic questions have taken over completely, partly in order to compensate for the lack of theological substance.<sup>97</sup> Bonhoeffer ends this chapter on the students with a more general comment on Union's influence on society in furthering Christianity's "Säkularisierungsprozeß".<sup>98</sup> He acknowledges Union's effective critique of fundamentalism and - to some extent - of Chicago's radical humanists. But he is concerned that "die Basis auf der man nach dem Einreißen wieder aufbauen könnte, ... nicht tragfähig [ist]."<sup>99</sup>

## 2. Understanding the Influence of Pragmatism

Bonhoeffer then moves on in his report, explaining how he discovered the strong influence of pragmatism on philosophical and theological thinking at Union. As he attended the first seminars in philosophy of religion and theology Bonhoeffer experienced their thinking as rather unusual and alien.<sup>100</sup> Encouraged by the way the language and thinking of German theology is determined by philosophical concepts, he recognized the need to study their presuppositions, in order to arrive at a fair judgment. Professor Lyman became an important interlocutor, giving him the opportunity to discuss specific readings in private tutorials.<sup>101</sup> It was hence through studying the representatives of radical empiricism, especially William James, that

Bonhoeffer claims to have found the key to the theological language and thinking of liberal Americans. His critical evaluation of the implications for philosophy's self-understanding and the question of truth are poignant: "Wahrheit 'gilt' nicht, sondern 'works' und das ist ihr Kriterium."<sup>102</sup> But he also observes how "Denken und Leben ... sich hier sichtlich in großer Nähe zueinander [vollziehen]."<sup>103</sup> And it is this interrelation between thought and deed that continued to captivate him. Bonhoeffer then critically examines James' concept of the "growing God" that was well received at Union and in liberal circles of the United States. It is said to combine "Religion und Fortschrittsglaube in virtuoser Weise, sodaß eines durch das andre seine Stütze und Rechtfertigung erhält."<sup>104</sup> And yet Bonhoeffer recognizes its danger in the way "daß Religion hier im Keim schon ist, was sie bei Dewey ausschließlich war, nämlich 'social ethics.'"<sup>105</sup> This tendency is seen to explain an outsider, "warum der moderne Amerikaner schlechthin verständnislos bleibt für paulinisches und lutherisches Christentum."<sup>106</sup> Bonhoeffer brands them to be pure Pelagians and followers of Protagoras, for "Der Mensch ist das Maß aller Dinge."<sup>107</sup> To further illustrate his judgment he refers to a particular discussion which gives us a glimpse of how controversial and heated some of the arguments in the seminar must have been and to what extent Bonhoeffer openly challenged the dominant views: "Einer der führenden Professoren im Union Theological Seminary hat es mir gegenüber in einer Diskussion vor zahlreichen Studenten unter deren Beifall zugegeben, daß ihm die justification by faith nicht wichtig, sondern gleichgültig sei."<sup>108</sup> Bonhoeffer continues to explain how this pragmatic concept of truth helped him to understand not only the theological scene but also the kind of life style he encountered in many circles. He especially ponders pragmatism's consequences in view of the relationship of truth and community: "Daß Wahrheit nicht mehr die innere Kraft besitzt Gemeinschaft zu zerreißen und gerade dadurch aufzubauen und fruchtbar zu machen, d.h. durch scheinbare Lebensferne wirklich lebensnah zu sein, ist mir eine soziale Folge des Pragmatismus. Man traut den 'Tatsachen' und ihrer 'eigenen Entwicklung' und sieht die Wahrheit nur immanent, nicht in ihrem transzendenten Anspruch."<sup>109</sup> Bonhoeffer unmasks this approach as "eine rein individualistische Lebensauffassung ..., die jedem sein Glück gönnen will und darüber hinaus nicht viel kennt ..."<sup>110</sup> At the same time he recognizes pragmatism's and instrumentalism's profound contributions "für eine

Umgestaltung der bisherigen Lebensform in Erziehung, Politik, Sozialarbeit im Sinn der großen Idee des sozialen Fortschritts ...”<sup>111</sup>

Bonhoeffer ends this section by looking at America's political and spiritual history as explained in *The religious background of American culture* by Thomas Cuning Hall: “Seiner These, daß der amerikanische Protestantismus älter sei als der reformatorische und daher seinen definitiv kirchenlosen individualistischen Charakter trage, füge sich das Faktum des überwältigenden Einflusses des Pragmatismus sehr gut ein.”<sup>112</sup>

Bonhoeffer draws on Hall's insights in order to understand American Protestantism. He was especially struck by the argument, “daß der amerikanische Protestantismus sich wesentlich unberührt vom reformatorischen Protestantismus ausgebildet habe als eine Fortsetzung der Wiclifschen Gedanken und des radikalen Dissentertums ...”<sup>113</sup>

But Bonhoeffer also observes the strong influence of religious individualism that is traced back to the nonconformity of the pioneer days. It is made responsible for the lack of any confession or dogma. Its purest form is associated with his experience of the Quakers and the Congregationalists. In fact, in their expression of such individualism the Quakers represent to Bonhoeffer “die Grundform amerikanischen Kirchentums”: “Bei den Quäkern gibt es folgerichtig auch keine eigentliche Predigt, keinen Pfarrer, keine ‘Kirche’. Der Geist wirkt unmittelbar im Fühlen und Handeln. Freilich haben auch die Quäkerversammlungen ihren ursprünglichen Enthusiasmus verloren und es herrscht eine weiche fast lyrische Stimmung in dem was da vorgebracht wird.”<sup>114</sup>

While he perceives America's churches to still be under their spell, the churches of English and German origin are perceived as being less affected. The fundamental reason for this development is located within their understanding of pneumatology: “Weil zutiefst der Geist Gottes nicht ans Wort gebunden gedacht ist, bleibt unverstanden, was Predigt, Bekenntnis, Dogma, Kirche, Gemeinschaft ist.”<sup>115</sup>

This explains for Bonhoeffer the unashamed attacks directed against Christian dogma from the pulpit.<sup>116</sup> He then continues by critically assessing the churches' self-understanding as “Freiwilligkeitskirche[n]”. This description is judged incorrect both as a general statement and a formal understanding. The heart of the problem is said to lie “in der hier besonders naheliegenden großen Verwechslung der Kirche mit einem religiösen Verein.”<sup>117</sup> But even the critical voices emerging from fundamentalism are not perceived to offer a viable alternative. For while they do seem to conserve some

reformed understanding, he judges them captives of a crude orthodoxy. The Southern Baptist Church is cited as its most striking example revealing at the same time another characteristic of the American nature which is described as "eine unerbittliche Härte des Festhaltens am Besitz, sei er von dieser oder von jener Welt."<sup>118</sup> And he concludes in this respect: "Ist aber in religiöser Hinsicht diese Position entschieden im Prozeß der Auflösung begriffen, so ist sie noch fast ungebrochen stark im sozial und ethischen Denken auch des aufgeklärten Amerikaners."<sup>119</sup>

### 3. The Church and the Problem of Racism

In the next section Bonhoeffer discusses "Kirche und Predigt". In addition to the daily morning services in the chapel at Union, Bonhoeffer often managed to listen to two sermons each Sunday.<sup>120</sup> He attended the services of various denominations and independent churches. Bonhoeffer is deeply impressed by the dedication and personal sacrifices of American Christians when it comes to social action.<sup>121</sup> With some amusement he writes about the various themes and summaries published every Monday morning in the New York Times which are seen offering good insights into contemporary homiletics.<sup>122</sup> Summing up the intention and content of such a homiletic approach Bonhoeffer writes: "Man will in Amerika zur Gegenwart predigen, und man identifiziert Gegenwartspredigt mit politisch-sozialer und mit apologetischer Predigt."<sup>123</sup> With great concern and some consternation Bonhoeffer remarks about how difficult it is to find someone to preach about "das Evangelium Jesu Christi, vom Kreuz, von Sünde und Vergebung, von Tod und Leben."<sup>124</sup> In other words, the traditional themes of Christian preaching are replaced by a different gospel summed up as follows: "Ein fortschrittsgläubiger ethischer und sozialer Idealismus der, man weiß nicht ganz woher, sich das Recht nimmt, sich 'christlich' zu nennen."<sup>125</sup> This is seen to also affect the general understanding of church: "Und an der Stelle der Kirche als der Gemeinde der Gläubigen Christi steht die Kirche als Gesellschaftskorporation."<sup>126</sup> Bonhoeffer hence comes to a rather negative conclusion when looking at New York's Christian scene which once again reflects an experience of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild": "man kann sich des Eindrucks nicht erwehren, daß man hier wie dort vergessen hat, worum es sich eigentlich handelt."<sup>127</sup> Bonhoeffer's assessment of the Sunday Schools is just as critical.<sup>128</sup> To compensate for this general lack of



theological substance and content some churches devised the even more problematic strategy of hiring an evangelist once a year for a revival: "Die Primitivität der Mittel, mit denen diese Leute dann mit den Emotionen der Gemeinde spielen können, weil jedes gesunde Kriterium fehlt, ist beschämend."<sup>129</sup> The kind of psychological manipulation involved is deemed responsible for the success of some of the "schwärmerisch-eschatologisch-radikalen Sekten ..."<sup>130</sup> The burning issue arising from this is the question "woraus diese sonderbare Gestalt kirchlichen Wesens und Unwesens erwachsen konnte."<sup>131</sup>

But there is one group which is exempted from this overall critical view of the churches: "ziemlich unberührt, ja gemieden von der weißen Kirche steht die Kirche der Verstoßenen Amerikas: die Negerkirche."<sup>132</sup> Commenting on the congregational shouts and exclamations during the service, he is especially struck to hear the gospel not only being preached but wholeheartedly received: "Es ist aber deutlich, daß immer dort, wo wirklich vom Evangelium die Rede war, die Teilnahme aufs Höchste stieg. Man konnte hier wirklich noch von Sünde und Gnade und von der Liebe zu Gott und der Letzten Hoffnung christlich reden und hören, wenn auch in anderer Form als wir es gewohnt sind."<sup>133</sup> It is the "black Christ" who he finds being preached with great passion in these black congregations.<sup>134</sup> Andreas Pangritz points out how later on in his winter 1932/1933 lectures on recent theology Bonhoeffer identifies the Russian Revolution and the "black Christ":

Christ stands in opposition to the religion of "Mammon". Therefore the Russian Revolution could be understood as "a protest against the capitalist Christ, not against Christ himself ..." The only way in which the West knows Christ is as the capitalist Christ. Protest against *this* perverted understanding of Christ is more than legitimate. The same can be said of the demand for a "black Christ" and the boycott of the white Christ by African-Americans. This boycott is directed against the Christ, who has become a camouflage of white domination.<sup>135</sup>

Bonhoeffer then continues to explain in his report how he spent a great amount of time exploring "das Negerproblem" from all sides. This became an important vantage point as he tried "von diesem etwas verborgenen Winkel aus auch das weiße Amerika

zu beobachten."<sup>136</sup> He acknowledges the important mediating role his friendship with black seminarian Frank Fisher played in this respect.<sup>137</sup> Bonhoeffer expands on the tremendous insights gained through this friendship in his second, much shorter report to the "Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst". It is Fisher who helped him to distinguish between constitutional ideals and harsh social reality. It once again enabled greater "Wirklichkeitsnähe", this time in the sense of seeing through the veil of institutional phraseology: "Ich hatte hier Gelegenheit, an einem sehr heiklen Punkt Amerika intensiv kennen zu lernen, ohne daß man mich hier irgendwie hätte blenden können. Und die Ergebnisse solcher Kenntnisaufnahme sind allerdings erschütternd. Man bekommt etwas von dem wirklichen Gesicht Amerikas zu sehen, das sich hinter dem Schleier der Worte der Verfassung 'all men are created free and equal' verbirgt ..."<sup>138</sup> In fact, Bethge notes: "Die Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen, die er Frank Fisher verdankte, spielten in Bonhoeffers späteren Erzählungen aus den USA eine Hauptrolle."<sup>139</sup> Fisher introduced Bonhoeffer to the unique Afro-American expression of Christianity. And yet, as Lehmann recalls, it was mutual interest in each others lives that shaped this friendship inducing an experience of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität". For "Frank was as interested in finding out about Germany as Bonhoeffer was in exploring the black experience."<sup>140</sup> Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann remembers how Bonhoeffer, deeply moved by the experience he shared with Fisher "later told German students of his friend's admonition to let the suffering of American blacks be known in Germany."<sup>141</sup> It was a friendship that went beyond the daily encounters in the seminars and included regular visits to Harlem. Bethge highlights the particular difficulties of such a friendship across racial lines: "Naturgemäß kam dieser Freundschaft nicht dieselbe absichtslose Leichtigkeit zustatten wie etwa dem Umgang mit Paul Lehmann. Die Freiheit dieses Verhältnisses bedurfte der wiederholten Bestätigungen."<sup>142</sup> But Bonhoeffer proved to be "ein überzeugender Künstler im Anbieten unvoreingenommener Partnerschaft."<sup>143</sup> Bethge refers to a particular incident where Bonhoeffer proved unconditional solidarity: "Als den Freunden in einem angesehenen Restaurant Anzeichen gegeben wurden, daß man Fisher nicht ebenso bedienen würde wie die anderen, verließen sie ostentativ das Lokal."<sup>144</sup>

Harlem was just a few blocks from Union Theological Seminary. Bonhoeffer experienced his involvement in this black community as one of the most important

and enjoyable events of his stay in the States. Zerner is convinced that "The most deeply felt, creative influences of Bonhoeffer's first trip to America were linked to the life-affirming, joyful environment of the black Baptist community in Harlem."<sup>145</sup> He spent many Sundays and evenings there and participated in special study excursions into Harlem.<sup>146</sup> André Dumas in fact observed "that Bonhoeffer could not get enough of Harlem."<sup>147</sup> Bethge comments on the intimacy of these encounters with amazement: "Bei der Deliktheit persönlicher Beziehungen zwischen Weißen und Farbigen in den Staaten ist es erstaunlich, wie weit Bonhoeffer in dem familiären Bereich der *outcasts* von Harlem Eingang gefunden hat."<sup>148</sup> In a radio talk on BBC, 13 March 1960, Paul Lehmann observes: "What was so impressive was the way in which he (Bonhoeffer) pursued the understanding of the problem to its minutest detail through books and countless visits to Harlem, through participation in Negro youth work, but even more through a remarkable kind of identity with the Negro community so that he was received there as though he had never been an outsider at all."<sup>149</sup>

Bonhoeffer's involvement reached an unusual level of commitment and intimacy, especially with respect to Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church, which, as Burton Nelson put it, became "a spiritual home" to him.<sup>150</sup> Its minister, the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Senior, was known to push for intercultural encounter and "Fremderfahrung" by "trying to help all races understand each other better that they may love each other more."<sup>151</sup> One of the hallmarks of his ministry at Abyssinia, which lasted twenty-nine years, was the "conscious attempt to incorporate white people into the life of the church" thereby aiming at an interracial church staff.<sup>152</sup> But he is also perceived to have "shaped this church into a model of Christian activism organized through thirty clubs, combining educational, social, recreational, charitable, and youth activities with Christian study and growth."<sup>153</sup> Young is therefore right to maintain that Abyssinian was a paragon of the black church which, in Powell's own words, "'from its beginning until now, has valiantly fought for freedom, justice and every principle of Christianity ...'"<sup>154</sup> He also emphasizes that it was because of Powell that "Bonhoeffer taught Sunday school and worked in the various clubs of a church that was at the forefront of the struggle for freedom."<sup>155</sup>

Bonhoeffer was therefore “surely in the right place to understand that the Negro problem was *the* problem in America.”<sup>156</sup> In sketching the plight of Abyssinian’s Afro-Americans Young highlights the historical-political background of their own particular journey: “Having migrated from the Southland seeking the Promised Land, fleeing the violence against them and the cul-de-sac of peasant servility (or having been in New York over the course of several generations), they found themselves in Harlem not even a century removed from slavery’s drudgery.”<sup>157</sup> Many of its members felt trapped in Harlem as they had in Dixie: “The Great Depression of the 1930s made their lives all the more difficult. In Abyssinian, founded in 1808 by Ethiopian merchants – they ‘had attempted to worship in a local white Baptist church and were insulted by being herded to the back upstairs’ – the problem was never on the back burner.”<sup>158</sup>

But apart from being a tremendous learning experience for Bonhoeffer, Bethge also detects the unique contribution Bonhoeffer must have brought to this encounter: “Er [Bonhoeffer] hatte etwas von der Fähigkeit dem Verletzlichen und Empfindsamen seinen Stolz glaubwürdig zurückzugeben.”<sup>159</sup> And yet, while acknowledging Bonhoeffer’s unique contribution to these encounters, Young critiques Bethge’s explanation as rather patronizing and one-sided: “It is inconceivable to me, however, that one man, no matter how gifted, could restore something that has never been lost really. Afro-Americans have never been so oppressed as to have neither pride nor confidence. Sameness only makes it seem so. Nor have they been so broken – terrorized, yes – as to be as vulnerable and as sensitive as abused children.”<sup>160</sup> Instead Young interestingly argues more in view of Bonhoeffer’s self-understanding and attitude: “I suspect Bonhoeffer was welcomed in Harlem because he carried himself like a pilgrim on the way. Otherwise Harlem would not have been so hospitable. Yes: a pilgrim on the way – a Thou-in-the-image-of-God – a reserved but humble man *leaning on the Lord*; someone who understood the words of a spiritual,

You got shoes

I got shoes

All God’s children got shoes

When I get to heaven

going to put on my shoes  
And walk all over God's heaven."<sup>161</sup>

Young's reading of Bonhoeffer's loyalty to Harlem's community through the lenses of this spiritual provides us hence with yet another dimension of Malinowski's "Barfußmethode". To Bonhoeffer the spirituals offered an important point of entry to understand the Afro-American "other": "Wer die negro spirituals gehört und verstanden hat, weiß von der seltsamen Mischung von gehaltener Schwermut und ausbrechendem Jubel in der Seele des Negers."<sup>162</sup> And yet he also acknowledged, "daß die Neger den Weißen hier noch wesentlich mehr geben werden als ihre Volkslieder."<sup>163</sup> His particular love for the spirituals illustrates what Zerner describes as his sensitivity "to the authenticity and power of black aesthetic expression in music and literature" as an original black contribution to American culture.<sup>164</sup> His fascination with the spirituals also helped him identify something of the paradoxical perversities inherent in any racist society: "Jeder weiße Amerikaner kennt, singt und liebt diese Lieder. Es ist schwer begreiflich, daß große Negersänger vor überfüllten Konzertsälen der Weißen diese Lieder singen und beispiellosen Beifall finden können, und daß gleichzeitig denselben Männern und Frauen durch soziale Diskriminierung der Zugang zu der Gemeinschaft der Weißen verschlossen bleibt."<sup>165</sup> But above all it accentuates an aspect of his American sojourn that has often been overlooked. For whenever he listened to the spirituals, according to Young, he encountered the continuum of Abyssinian's roots in Africa: "The blacks Bonhoeffer fraternized with were, by and large, the descendants of slaves, the progeny of Africans, who, as chattel, were bartered in the contract arrangement. Until this very day, they have been unable to escape their domination, inherent as it has been to American capitalism as a 'comprehensive system of means.'"<sup>166</sup> Young's "emphasis on *African* is to make the point that Bonhoeffer encountered more than the 'Negro,' a peculiarly *American* creation."<sup>167</sup> The African roots are said to be "in the faces of these black people, and in their folkways, vernacular, literature, and music – in the spirituals particularly."<sup>168</sup> Powell embraced this African otherness which was "hovering *ghostlike* [not only] at Abyssinian [but] was all-pervasive in Harlem itself. For Harlem still had the whiff of Marcus Garvey about it. Garvey sought to return African-Americans bodily, but moreover ideologically and spiritually, to Africa. *Let Africa be our guiding star – our*

*star of destiny!* exhorted the Jamaican-born Garvey.”<sup>169</sup> At Abyssinian Powell also “believed in and encouraged ‘shouting’ services, where the parishioners would ‘get happy’ and express their emotion in open, often *frenzied* ways. Such displays of religious fervor were frowned on by some of the more sedate Negro churches, but not Abyssinian, where, in fact, at times, the effectiveness of the minister was as often measured in terms of the amount of noise and jubilation the preacher’s sermons could arouse as in the numbers of converts and members attracted ...”<sup>170</sup> Referring to a conversation with Bonhoeffer on a Monday in the Union Seminary library, Rudolf Schade recalled Bonhoeffer’s “thrill and joy of having had members of the black congregation respond to his message. They expressed their support and agreement with his points by punctuating his sermon with ‘Amens’ and ‘Hallelujahs.’”<sup>171</sup> It is Paul Lehmann who interprets Bonhoeffer’s fascination with black spirituality as yet another expression of his search for an authentic expression of Christianity. For in light of his conviction that western Christianity was dying “he found in the black religious experience a kind of genuine Christianity which intrigued him. One of the things he might have done, had he lived, was to have provided a theological bridge; he might have been an interpreter of black theology.”<sup>172</sup> In fact, Bonhoeffer used his record collection of spirituals to introduce his students at Berlin University and the candidates of the Confessing Church’s Finkenwalde Seminary to what Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann, one of his students, recalls as “eine völlig unbekannte, fremde und erschreckende Welt.”<sup>173</sup> As a “go-between” Bonhoeffer therefore drew on the otherness of the spirituals to expose his students to a genuine “Grenzerfahrung” with the Afro-American “other”.

The African rootedness of the spirituals is confirmed by Rae Connor’s study of the spirituals as a postcolonial response: “Although the nature of the language of the spirituals cannot be separated from the reality of slavery in which it participates, there is a reality – an historical, pre-colonial African consciousness – that lies behind the presence of the biblical language with which the spirituals are imbued.”<sup>174</sup> And so even though Christianity may have offered a new text for the creators of the spirituals, the musical form and its transformative power already existed in the consciousness of enslaved Africans.<sup>175</sup> The spirituals therefore represented what Rae Connor described as “resistance in song.”<sup>176</sup> For the creators of the spirituals clearly challenged “the

prevailing biblical doctrines of its professed adherents that presumed to justify slavery” by engaging in what today is referred to as a postcolonial biblical discourse.<sup>177</sup> This is done “not from the abstract perspective of a contemporary academic, but from the concrete perspective of those who, oppressed by a colonial legacy, used the Bible as a basis for developing an aesthetic mode of resistance.”<sup>178</sup> The spirituals are interpreted as honoring

the liberating elements of the Bible by employing African and African-American adaptations that simultaneously stripped the Bible of its hegemonic colonial power while restoring its intended liberating power. In the spirituals enslaved people critically analyzed their colonial conditions, fashioned a creative theological response, indicted their oppressors without overtly denigrating them, re-asserted the influence of an African sensibility, and empowered themselves by exercising a form of resistance that would endure longer than the conditions to which they were subject.<sup>179</sup>

It is in view of a fascinating inter-textual play that the spirituals are seen to be a hallmark of Afro-American aesthetics of resistance: “The ways in which enslaved people adapted the Bible to become representative of their situation, the ways in which they othered it by blending African and folk elements with conventional Christian categories, establish the spirituals as a unique demonstration of signifying levels of resistance.”<sup>180</sup> It is interpreted as a kind of artistic “othering” of the Bible by those who are subjected to social “othering” by the dominant culture. Employing rhetoric common to postcolonial analysis, Nathaniel Mackey elaborates how “artistic othering” like that practiced by the creators of the spirituals “has to do with innovation, invention, and change, on which cultural health and diversity depend and thrive” while “social othering such as practiced by the slaveholders has to do with power, exclusion, and privilege, the centralizing of a norm against which otherness is measured, meted out, marginalized.”<sup>181</sup> The spirituals hence illustrate a powerful resistance to those forces of “social othering” which generate experiences of “Fremdheit als Gegenbild”. Interestingly, “in the African-American mode of call and response, the call extended is meant to be heard and spoken not just by the oppressed but by the oppressor as well ...”<sup>182</sup> Every concert, then, and every church service

rendered an invitation to both oppressed and oppressors “nun erst verstehen zu lernen, was wir *nicht* verstehen.”<sup>183</sup>

Drawing on James Cone’s insights on the “complex world of thought underlying the slave songs” and its humanizing characteristics Zerner points out the parallels to two of Bonhoeffer’s central Christian concerns: “the person of Jesus Christ and communal experience within concrete historical realities”, in particular “the solidarity of sufferers.”<sup>184</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Bonhoeffer encountered “reformatorisches Christentum” in the black churches.<sup>185</sup> It exhibits an experience of “Fremdheit als Resonanzboden des Eigenen” in the sense that it reflects “Einsicht in den tragenden Grund” of his own spiritual and theological formation.<sup>186</sup> However, both Christian and secular historians have highlighted the distinctiveness of black Christianity from western European and white American Christianity. Referring to a study by Eugene Genovese Zerner points out how “African tradition imparted to the religion of the slaves an irrepressible affirmation of life – an ability to see the world as a ‘vale of tears’ and yet experience a joy in life that has sometimes evoked admiration from whites, sometimes contempt, but almost always astonishment.”<sup>187</sup> How deeply Bonhoeffer was touched by the spirituality expressed in the spirituals is further revealed by the way he comes back to the powerful impact of black singing during the first months of his imprisonment. In an attempt to recapture the past through writing a novel Bonhoeffer included “a loving, supportive black mammy.”<sup>188</sup> Zerner explains: “... to fit more logically the story’s setting in Germany, a South African (rather than an American) plantation emerges as the source of the black characters, who ‘sing so sweetly, so warmly.’ The memory of this singing deeply moves the leading female figure who is ‘seized by a most dreadful longing (*Sehnsucht*).’ Homesick for South Africa and her negro mammy, she expresses the feeling that she ‘has left her soul there’ and will never find it again in Germany.”<sup>189</sup>

But also what Bethge describes as “Die Wendung des Theologen zum Christen” in 1932, characterized amongst others by Bonhoeffer’s renewed interest in the bible and more specifically in the sermon of the mount, will have to be considered in the light of the influence of the spirituals.<sup>190</sup> For the artistic othering of the spirituals also illustrates how



enslaved people amplified the biblical implications of a postcolonial challenge by relying on the Bible as a primary model for shaping their analysis of a response to oppression. As the greatest 'conjure book' of all ..., the Bible was an important source for the slave's postcolonial critique, their creative empowerment, and their actual liberation.<sup>191</sup>

And yet, Bonhoeffer's analysis of the black church is far from a romanticized picture. While reflecting on them as possible constituting the only "Proletarierkirchen" he also recognizes within this rich spiritual tradition the emerging tensions between the generations of the fathers and the sons. Bonhoeffer was alarmed by the way young blacks turned away from their fathers' faith: "Aber freilich regt sich unter den Jungen, die sehen, wie die christliche Predigt ihre Väter unter ihrem unvergleich harten Schicksal hat so geduldig werden lassen, der Widerspruch gegen solche Religionen, d.h. gegen das Christentum ..."<sup>192</sup> America's socially well integrated white churches are held responsible for this development: "wenn dieser Widerspruch einmal mächtig übergreift, dann wird das weiße Amerika sich schuldig dafür wissen müssen, daß diese schwarze Massen gottlos geworden sind. Wir stehen hier an einer gewaltigen Wende."<sup>193</sup> During a trip to Washington with his friend Fisher, Bonhoeffer was introduced to the leaders of the young black movement at Howard College.<sup>194</sup> Apart from the usual sightseeing<sup>195</sup> Bonhoeffer was deeply impressed by his conversations with these young leaders providing him with a view from within: "Auffallend ist allerdings, daß all die führenden Leute einen hohen Prozentsatz weißes Blut haben, oft wie Weiße aussehen. Die Neger behaupten, das sei Zufall, im Ganzen seien die ganz Schwarzen viel höher eingeschätzt."<sup>196</sup> At the same time he was exposed to the cruel everyday reality of racism: "Die Zustände sind schon ziemlich unglaublich. Nicht nur getrennte Eisenbahn, Tramway, Bus südlich von Washington, sondern, als ich z.B. mit einem Neger in ein kleines Restaurant zum Essen gehen wollte, wurde mir die Bedienung verweigert."<sup>197</sup> Writing to his brother Karl-Friedrich about his journey to the Southern States Bonhoeffer makes a conscious point in deconstructing racist stereotypes:

Die Separation der Weißen von den Schwarzen in den Südstaaten macht wirklich einen ziemlich beschämenden Eindruck. Sie ist auf den Bahnen bis ins Kleinste hinein durchgeführt. Ich habe dabei festgestellt, daß die Wagen der Neger meist wesentlich sauberer aussahen, als die anderen. Außerdem hat es mich gefreut, wenn die Weißen sich in ihren Wagen drängen mußten, während im ganzen Negerwagen oft nur einer saß. Die Art, mit der die Südländer über die Neger reden, ist einfach widerwärtig und die Pastoren sind da in nichts besser als die anderen.<sup>198</sup>

It is in view of these experiences of racism that Bonhoeffer notes: "Es ist schon unheimlich, daß in einem Land mit so maßlos viel Phrasen über Brüderlichkeit, Frieden etc. solche Dinge völlig unkorrigiert dastehen."<sup>199</sup> In responding to Bonhoeffer's observations in the light of his own experiences of America Karl-Friedrich maintains: "Jedenfalls ist unsere 'Judenfrage' daneben ein Witz, es wird nur noch wenige geben, die behaupten sie würden hier unterdrückt. Jedenfalls nicht in Frankfurt."<sup>200</sup> Bonhoeffer's first hand encounters and observations were substantiated by more in-depth research. Not only did he collect "Material der schwarzen Kampforganisation, der 'National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ...'"<sup>201</sup>, but in Reinhold Niebuhr's seminar on ethical perspectives in modern literature Bonhoeffer also acquainted himself with the recommended literature by black writers.<sup>202</sup> In this respect Bonhoeffer's premonition about the decisive turning point mentioned above comes out clearly when he writes: "According to the whole mood in present Negro literature it seems to me that the race question is arriving at a turning point. The attempt to overcome the conflict religiously or ethically will turn in a violent political objection."<sup>203</sup>

#### 4. Exploring the Social Gospel

Moving on to the next section on "Soziale Arbeit" Bonhoeffer notes how this traditional ethos of individualistic thinking - the American Puritanic ethos of "Jeder helfe sich selbst" - is now being challenged by extreme unemployment in New York. Its presuppositions are suddenly perceived to be outdated for "Der Mensch hat tatsächlich nicht mehr den Posten in der Welt, den er durch seine eigene Arbeitsleistung und Tüchtigkeit verdient."<sup>204</sup> The harsh social reality involves a

radical change of perspective since against this background “der Grundsatz der freien Wohltätigkeit als Mittel sozialer Abhilfe unsittlich [wird]. Er beruht auf falscher Bewertung andern Lebens.”<sup>205</sup> It is the social gospel which is seen to promote this change of attitude in its attempt to establish the “other’s” right of existence. Bonhoeffer comments how this social gospel is “dem Namen nach überwunden, der Sache nach aber noch kräftig vorhanden ...”<sup>206</sup> As an outstanding example of its thinking Bonhoeffer refers to Walter Rauschenbusch's *For God and the People. Prayers of the Social Awakening* published 1910. His first hand encounters with the actual “character building agencies” were organized by Webber's course “Church and Community” which looked at the church’s socio-political involvement. and provided Bonhoeffer with a wide exposure to the social scene.<sup>207</sup>

In his second report Bonhoeffer highlights the tremendous learning experience of his visits to these agencies.<sup>208</sup> He is deeply impressed by the commitment shown in these projects and marvels about “wieviel hier mit persönlichen Opfern getan und erreicht wird, mit wieviel Hingabe, Energie und Verantwortungsbewußtsein hier gearbeitet wird.”<sup>209</sup> In comparison to Europe this task is said to be slightly easier because of a still less developed class consciousness of the proletariat.<sup>210</sup> And yet “je stärker dies wird, desto dringender wird der Ruf nach staatlichem Eingreifen.”<sup>211</sup> According to Bethge this kind of initiative and commitment to the worker’s plight shown by the churches and the students at Union must have introduced Bonhoeffer “to the other side of the capitalist coin”<sup>212</sup> and ignited his attempt in 1932, “nun selber mit seinen Studenten in Berlin Arbeitslose zu betreuen, unbefangen um Geld zu bitten und eine Jugendstube aufzubauen.”<sup>213</sup> In particular his encounter with the black proletariat enabled him “to see another facet of the same Europe, a facet which would be voiced as frequently on a record of Negro spirituals played for labourers’ children as through harmonious chamber music in the Bonhoeffer drawing room.”<sup>214</sup> And it must have been due to these first-hand experiences with the proletariat that Bonhoeffer “trotz theologischer Bedenken auch nie leichtfertig oder abwertend über das *social gospel* berichtet.”<sup>215</sup>

But Zerner also underlines the influence of Lehmann, “who alerted Bonhoeffer to the need for racial justice in the nation, as well as within the white American church,

[and] also exhibited concern for civil liberties and economic justice.” Lehmann himself remained rather modest about his impact on Bonhoeffer: “I don’t know how much actually rubbed off on him ... My view of action was more politically oriented; Dietrich’s was basically Lutheran, in keeping with Luther’s statement ‘that faith is a busy, living, active thing.’”<sup>216</sup> In addition Niebuhr’s lecture on reading modern American literature in view of the social and Christian problems it presented offered another important perspective on the social issues at stake.<sup>217</sup>

Bonhoeffer concludes this section by acknowledging the lasting impression the representatives of the social gospel have made on him. He especially highlights H. Wards *Which way religion?* that “ist in seiner Nüchternheit und seinem Ernst unwiderleglich ...”<sup>218</sup> Ward is characterized as “ein leidenschaftlicher Nonkonformist sozialistischer Färbung”<sup>219</sup> and it was while attending his seminar “Ethical interpretations” that Bonhoeffer was challenged to write political commentaries on contemporary problems.<sup>220</sup> It included debates on the “Wickersham report on prohibition”, unemployment insurances, birth control and the London *Round Table* Conferences.<sup>221</sup> It was at a time when the United States had to face great political upheavals: “Arbeitslosigkeit ängstigte die Menschen; die Zahl der Unbeschäftigten lag 1930 in Amerika prozentual weit höher als in Deutschland. Seit dem großen Bankkrach im Jahr zuvor stand die *depression* in voller Entwicklung. Die Prohibitions Gesetze erregten die Öffentlichkeit; die ‘wets’ demonstrierten für ihre Aufhebung, die ‘drys’ für wirksamere Durchsetzung.”<sup>222</sup> And yet Bonhoeffer always remains mindful of the danger of reducing the essence of the gospel to social activism.<sup>223</sup> He expressed this concern in many discussions and lectures while trying to point out - even though not with much success - “daß reformatorisches Christentum all diese Dinge durchaus nicht aus-, sondern einschließe, aber daß die Bewertung unterschiedlich sei.”<sup>224</sup>

## 5. Striving for Peace

Bonhoeffer ends this report with a section on “Persönliches” describing his role as a German “ambassador” whenever he was invited to preach or talk.<sup>225</sup> Apparently it was

the topic of "Krieg und Frieden" he was invited to talk about most frequently. The peace organisation Fellowship of Reconciliation<sup>226</sup> had groups based in several of New York's congregations that regularly invited foreign students to speak, especially to the youth.<sup>227</sup> At one occasion Bonhoeffer spoke very personally about the challenges for world peace, highlighting the important role of the church and its message of a Christian love which knows no boundaries.<sup>228</sup> He ended his speech with a passionate plea for peace:

This is my message for you: hear the voice of your German brothers and sisters, take their stretched out hand. We know, it is not enough only to talk and to feel the necessity of peace, we must work seriously. There is so much meanness, selfishness, slander, hatred, prejudice among the nations. But we must overcome it. Today as never before nations of Europe – except Germany – are preparing for war. This makes our work very urgent. We must no longer waste time. Let us work together for an everlasting peace.<sup>229</sup>

In another talk to pupils and students about his experiences with the German youth movement Bonhoeffer again spoke about the longing for peace for humankind, this time connecting it with the love for one's country and home. Describing an evening by the fire he refers to a boy who "began to speak about his love for his own country and for the starry sky, which at that very time was shining upon people of all nations, upon all mankind and he said: how wonderful it would be if people of all nations lived in peace and quiet as the stars in the heaven above, if only nations could live together like brothers as they do in their own country."<sup>230</sup> At the end of the boy's talk the young people "raised their hands as a sign that they were willing to work for this peace in the country and in the world."<sup>231</sup> In summing up the two basic premises for peace work Bonhoeffer concludes: "... at first: love your home better than all, better also than all political and economic ideas, then you will be a true watchman of the peace in the whole world. Secondly: keep your eyes open and most important keep open – your hearts."<sup>232</sup> On Armistice Day, 9 November 1930 Bonhoeffer was invited to preach in the Memorial Methodist Church. Once again he talks about the "invisible community of the children of God" which stands above "all differences of race, nationality, custom ..."<sup>233</sup> Bonhoeffer's position on world peace was further strengthened when he attended the annual meeting of the Federal Council of Churches

and witnessed a widely noted resolution which disagreed with "der Theorie von der Alleinschuld Deutschlands am Kriege ..."<sup>234</sup>

And yet Bethge poignantly observes how his comments on Germany's peace aspirations and their representatives mirror "eher seine persönliche, in Umbildung begriffene Haltung zur Friedensfrage, als daß sie ein kompetentes Urteil über den Stand der Dinge in der Heimat vermittelten."<sup>235</sup> This is also reflected in Bonhoeffer's uncertain response to alarming news from Germany's political scene: "Neue Besorgnisse vor deutscher Kriegslüsterheit wurden laut; sie erschienen Bonhoeffer recht kurios. Er hatte den ungewöhnlichen Stimmengewinn der Nationalsozialisten bei den Septemberwahlen in Deutschland noch nicht gebührend zur Kenntnis genommen. Ein deutsch-österreichischer Zollunionsplan ließ Anschlußbefürchtungen entstehen. Putschgerüchte drangen über den Atlantik."<sup>236</sup> What Bethge describes as Bonhoeffer's "persönliche, in Umbildung begriffene Haltung zur Friedensfrage" was without doubt strongly influenced by his encounter with the French Jean Lasserre who was a Christian Pacifist and confronted him, as Bethge notes, "mit einem Gehorsam gegen das Friedensgebot Jesu, wie er diesem bisher nirgends begegnet war."<sup>237</sup> While Bonhoeffer became a pacifist in principle he continued to wrestle "mit der konkreten Antwort auf das biblische Friedensgebot und mit konkreten Schritten gegen Kriegsanstrengungen ..."<sup>238</sup> Bonhoeffer and Lasserre hence shared "eine Sehnsucht nach Konkretion der göttlichen Gnade und eine Wachheit dafür, sich ihrer Nähe nicht intellektuell zu verweigern ..."<sup>239</sup> According to De Lange this acquaintance also contributed to banishing "any traces of national parochialism from Bonhoeffer's thinking."<sup>240</sup> On one occasion they went to see the film based on Remarque's novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Sitting side by side in silence, a German and Frenchman, led to an experience which left a mark on both of them. Lasserre recalls the details of this incidence: "The audience was American, and since the film had been made from the point of view of the German soldiers, the audience immediately sympathized with the German soldiers. When they killed French soldiers on the screen, the crowd laughed and applauded. On the other hand, when the German soldiers were wounded or killed, there was a great silence and sense of deep emotion."<sup>241</sup> Apparently it "made such an impact on Lasserre that when talking about it forty-five years later he still bursts into tears."<sup>242</sup> De Lange, hence, concludes that

"Whereas Bonhoeffer's grandfather became a citizen of Europe at the sight of the *forum Romanum*, Bonhoeffer became a citizen of Europe watching a movie in New York."<sup>243</sup> It was finally during their trip to Mexico that they were invited to speak about peace at a teachers' seminary in Victoria. Lasserre recalls that "for the people of Victoria it was a tremendous event to listen to a German and a Frenchman together!"<sup>244</sup> It was not surprising, then, that once back in Germany, Bonhoeffer would become deeply involved in the ecumenical movement and the international struggle for peace.<sup>245</sup> The "Anklänge an nationalprotestantische und volkstumstheologische Anschauungen" as expressed in his Barcelona lectures 1928/29 were finally overcome: "Nicht mehr der mögliche Gegensatz von jungen und alten Völkern war nun im Blick, sondern das nationalübergreifende, eine universale Volk Christi."<sup>246</sup> Bonhoeffer's new Christian cosmopolitanism implied "a Christian cleansing of residual nationalism."<sup>247</sup> It also helped him realize that, as Geoffrey Kelly put it, "the community of the church is much more important than the national community."<sup>248</sup> It was in this sense that "Bonhoeffer's national commitment was not narrow nor chauvinist, but seen in terms of a concern for world peace."<sup>249</sup> It led to his rigorous wrestling "mit dem ökumenefeindlichen Nationalismus und Nationalsozialismus."<sup>250</sup>

Bonhoeffer ends with referring to his trips to Havana, Cuba and Washington D.C.. He especially highlights the big trip at the end of the year with Lasserre through the Midwest and South to Mexico City during which they visited several theological seminars and German congregations.<sup>251</sup> Bethge observes about the trip to Mexico: "Katholische Kultur und spanische Reminiszenzen übten eine stärkere Anziehungskraft aus als kalifornische Novitäten."<sup>252</sup> It was for Christmas that Bonhoeffer and his student friend Erwin Sutz were invited to Havana, Cuba.<sup>253</sup> In addition to helping with some of the teaching at the German school, Bonhoeffer also had the opportunity to preach again.<sup>254</sup> Given the season was Christmas he chose a rather unusual text which dealt with Moses' death on the brink of the promised land.<sup>255</sup> In recalling the particular circumstances of celebrating Christmas in Cuba Bonhoeffer writes to Maria von Wedemeyer from prison in 1943:

Die Sonne hat es mir von jeher angetan und mich oft genug daran erinnert, daß der Mensch von der Erde genommen ist und nicht aus Luft und Gedanken besteht. Das ging so weit, daß ich einmal, als ich an Weihnachten nach Cuba kam, um dort zu predigen, und aus dem Eis Nordamerika's in die blühende tropische Vegetation gelangte, ich fast dem Sonnekult erlegen wäre und kaum wußte, was ich eigentlich predigen sollte. Es war eine richtige Krise; und etwas davon überfällt mich in jedem Sommer, wenn ich die Sonne zu spüren bekomme ...

It is hence the encounter with the heat of the sun which created yet another important "Grenzerfahrung" in the sense of provoking confusion and silence. It resonates with what Behdad described as an "aesthetics of silence" that Bonhoeffer had already experienced in North Africa. It is a moment of surrender to the real and given, suggesting once again an experience of the "other" as seductive alternative and reminding him of the earthliness of his existence. It is a profound experience of "Wirklichkeitsnähe" not created but imposed by the otherness of the sun. And in this sense it illustrates a worldliness which "signifies the freedom to start again from the body and from the sun."<sup>256</sup>

### *Hermeneutical Reflections*

It was in the States then, that Bonhoeffer deeply felt, as he confessed to Rößler, both "die absolute Notwendigkeit der Zusammenarbeit *und* zugleich die unerklärliche Zerissenheit, die solches Zusammengehen einfach unmöglich zu machen scheint."<sup>257</sup> For, as he continues, "Von dort drüben gesehen kommt einem unsere Lage und Theologie so lokal vor, und es will einem nicht in den Sinn, daß in der ganzen Welt gerade Deutschland und dort gerade wieder ein paar Männer begriffen haben sollen, was Evangelium ist. Und doch sehe ich nirgendwo sonst eine Botschaft."<sup>258</sup> According to von Hase it is only in Bonhoeffer's later essay, "Protestantismus ohne Reformation", that one recognizes a more matured reflection on his American experiences by the way he attempts "seine auf Bekenntnis und Bekenntnisschriften fixierten Brüder aufzuschließen für eine ökumenische Einheit mit den 220 'Denominationen' Amerikas, den 'Protestantismus ohne Reformation' ernstzunehmen, in dem diese – die als Flüchtlinge 'ihr Bekenntnis schon geleistet



hatten' und nun auf die Toleranz der Aufnehmenden angewiesen waren-, keine Ansprüche mehr machen konnten."<sup>259</sup> It should therefore not surprise us that both reports on his first American journey end with a critical appraisal of the value of such intercultural encounters.

In his first report to the "Kirchenbundesamt" Bonhoeffer is sceptical of an approach which primarily looks at the learning experiences of such an exposure to another culture, echoing Schäffter's category of "Fremdheit als Ergänzung". He therefore rejects any simplistic act of cultural transaction: "Wenn man rückschauend die Fülle der Eindrücke überblickt, so wäre es töricht nun die Einzelheiten, die man 'für unsere Verhältnisse' gelernt hat, als das Entscheidende zu werten. Tatsächlich bin ich der Ansicht, daß man drüben außerordentlich wenig 'für unsere Verhältnisse' lernen kann, wenn man dabei an direkte Übertragung denkt."<sup>260</sup> It resonates with what Schäffter describes as an "*Ausdruck von Widerstand gegen herkömmliche Denkstrukturen*" characteristic of an understanding of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität": "Verweigert wird das 'Übersetzen' von der 'einen' zur 'anderen' Seite und das Einverleiben des anderen unter die eigene Perspektive."<sup>261</sup> And yet, even where the American "other" is seen to pose a threat, mirroring an experience of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild", it is also perceived to be a source for new insights: "Aber es scheint mir, daß man auch dort, wo man im wesentlichen die Bedrohung, die doch Amerika für uns bedeutet, sieht, ruhige Einsichten für unsere Verhältnisse gewinnt."<sup>262</sup> Bonhoeffer's final resumé is therefore rather modest: "Es ist eben nicht mehr und nicht weniger, als daß man angefangen hat, einen anderen Erdteil kennenzulernen."<sup>263</sup> In Bonhoeffer's case it certainly meant "nun erst verstehen zu lernen, was wir *nicht* verstehen."<sup>264</sup>

Bonhoeffer's second report to the "Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst"<sup>265</sup> ends with another attempt to clarify the benefits of such an intercultural experience. Bonhoeffer notes how in the second semester the language barrier disappears, enabling much more intensive studying. But he also once again problematizes a utilitarian attitude which in the first instance is concerned to instrumentalize one's experiences abroad. In questioning simplistic stereotypes he discards a self-centered interpretative stand as, reflected both in encounters of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild" and "Fremdheit als Ergänzung". For Bonhoeffer maintains: "Man kann sicher weder von

der 'Verheißung' noch von der 'Drohung' so einfach reden."<sup>266</sup> And he therefore concludes: "Es ist überhaupt nicht so wichtig, was es für uns ist als was es in sich ist. Und da ist eines sicher, nämlich daß es der Mühe wert ist, 10 Monate drüben zuzubringen."<sup>267</sup> It expresses the importance for a genuine "Grenzerfahrung" which allows, in Schäffter's words, "das Fremde als *Fremdes* [zu] belassen."<sup>268</sup>

Bonhoeffer's essay from 1939 on the other hand engages in a critical reflection on the problems of representation, specifically of encountering and understanding a foreign church.<sup>269</sup> He begins with a critical discussion on what prevents such an encounter, identifying two obstacles, which echo Schäffter's category of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild" and "Fremdheit als Ergänzung". The first pitfall is described as the observer's tendency, "die Fremdheit einer anderen Kirche der Eigentümlichkeit ihrer geographischen, nationalen oder sozialen Lage zuzuschreiben, sie also geschichtlich, politisch oder soziologisch verständlich machen zu wollen."<sup>270</sup> It leads to a problematic characterization as something being "typical": "Die großen Erweckungs- und Heiligungsbewegungen, das Puritanertum sind dann 'typisch angelsächsisch', das 'soziale Evangelium' (social gospel) 'typisch amerikanisch', und umgekehrt ist dann die Reformation 'typisch kontinental, bzw. deutsch'."<sup>271</sup> Though this is seen to constitute regular praxis of representation it is critiqued as both boring and wrong:

Üblich ist sie geworden, seit man sich mehr für die geschichtlichen Ausprägungen des Christentums als für seine Wahrheit interessiert; langweilig ist sie, weil sie zu einer toten und bequemen Schematisierung führt. Falsch ist sie, weil sie den gegenseitig verpflichtenden Charakter der Kirchen in ihrer Verkündigung und Lehre von vornherein auflöst; denn was geht den Christen in Deutschland schließlich etwas typisch amerikanisches an und was hat der Christ in Amerika mit einer typisch kontinentalen Reformation zu schaffen?<sup>272</sup>

According to Bonhoeffer such schematization and typification remains confined to a purely aesthetic view, engendering at most "eine gewisse ästhetische Freude an der Mannigfaltigkeit der Erscheinungsformen des Christentums ..."<sup>273</sup> It might also include the perception of finding "eine willkommene Ergänzung des eigenen Wesens" within another church.<sup>274</sup> But Bonhoeffer is deeply concerned to move beyond the

comfortable sphere “der unverbindlichen Beobachtungen” and encourage a serious encounter that leads “zu einer verpflichtenden Auseinandersetzung” resembling Schöffter’s understanding of “Fremdheit als Komplementarität”.<sup>275</sup> Interestingly, the motivation for such a committed engagement is deemed to be anchored in a theological question, namely “was Gott an und mit seiner Kirche und in Amerika tut, wie er sich ihr zu erkennen gibt, und ob und wie wir ihn in jener Kirche wiedererkennen.”<sup>276</sup> It injects into the encounter the fundamental question “nach Gottes Wort, nach Gottes Willen und Handeln” and makes it clear that we are dealing with “dasselbe Wort, ... dasselbe Gebot, dieselbe Verheißung, dasselbe Amt, dieselbe Gemeinde Jesu Christi in Amerika und bei uns.” Hence any attempt to explain the particular character and ethos of a church in terms of its socio-political context is vehemently rejected: “Die Reformation ist eben in der Tat als typisch deutsches Geschehen nicht zu verstehen; die Rechnung geht nicht auf. Ganz entsprechend ist es mit den Gestalten und Geschehnissen fremder Kirchen. Sie lassen sich sachlich einfach nicht aus den Eigentümlichkeiten der Völker erklären.”<sup>277</sup> Instead what one needs to hear is the claim God makes on us through the “other” in the sense of what one could describe as a divine “surplus”: “Es bleibt ein Rest, um den es geht.”<sup>278</sup> It echoes Foucault’s notion of a “surplus” which resists any form of subsumation by the imperial self and safeguards what Schöffter described as genuine “Grenzerfahrung”.

The second obstacle highlights the historical dimension of what we described as “surplus”. Bonhoeffer thereby discusses the danger of simply looking at the present ecclesiological scene without taking into account the church’s past history and how God made himself heard in different ways and at different times.<sup>279</sup> In the light of these reflections on the possible obstacles for a true encounter, Bonhoeffer hopes to respond in his essay to the following leading question which once again call his fellow Germans to hear and listen to the claim God makes on them through the American “other”: “Was tut Gott an und mit seiner Kirche in Amerika, was tut er durch sie an uns und durch uns an ihr?”<sup>280</sup> It is in asking this question that one is able, in Schöffter’s words, to observe what one is not able to observe: “Fremdheit macht den ‘blinden Fleck’ der eigenen Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit erkennbar und wird so zur mühevollen Erfahrung einer gegenseitigen Grenze.”<sup>281</sup> In fact, Bonhoeffer argues: “Es ist für die amerikanischen Denominationen eine schwere Aufgabe, den Kampf um

eine Bekenntniskirche recht zu verstehen: und es ist für die Kirchen der Reformation nicht weniger schwer, den Weg einer amerikanischen Denomination zu begreifen."<sup>282</sup> Bonhoeffer hence calls each side to acknowledge its own limitations and to become more receptive to each other's difference: "Es erschließt sich dem einen die ganze Fülle gottesdienstlicher, liturgischer Gestalt, aktiven Gemeindelebens, reicher Erfahrungen der Bedeutung der kirchlichen Verfassung; es erschließt sich dem anderen die Dringlichkeit der Wahrheitsfrage, der Reichtum christlicher Erkenntnis im Bekenntnis der Kirche ..."<sup>283</sup> Such a genuine encounter generates a humbleness, "die nicht von der eigenen Gestalt, sondern von Gottes Gnade allein das Heil erwartet."<sup>284</sup> Bonhoeffer then concludes that in acknowledging the lack of common ground, Holy Scripture emerges as "die einzige Ebene, auf der Christen einander begegnen können ..."<sup>285</sup>

These hermeneutical reflections around the question of what constitutes a genuine encounter resonate not only with Schäffter's *modi* of encounter but also with Bonhoeffer's theological argument for genuine transcendence and a theologically informed suspicion of representation as discussed in his seminar papers and lectures at Union Theological Seminary. This particular intersection of philosophical, sociological and theological debates around questions of alterity and reality will be explored at greater length in the final chapter on Bonhoeffer's "theological geography" of the boundary.

### *Conclusion*

Bethge's assessment of Bonhoeffer's report observes "eine Dialektik von Kritik und umfassender Bemühung um die starken Seiten des Phänomens, so daß das Eigene nun sogar provinziell erscheinen kann."<sup>286</sup> It reflects the dialectic of experiences of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild", of "Fremdheit als Ergänzung" and of genuine "Grenzerfahrungen" which our analysis tried to accentuate. And indeed one result of these encounters was a new awareness of Germany's provinciality. Bethge is therefore right to conclude: "Trotz unveränderter Parteinahme für Barth ist am Ende dieser Zeit nicht mehr europäisch-theologische Selbstsicherheit allein bestimmend gewesen."<sup>287</sup>

His American sojourn also changed his perception of Europe: "No longer determined by the academic circles of university professors, it was now defined by the conflict-ridden social political reality of capitalism and nationalism."<sup>288</sup> European-American civilization was seen to pose the challenge of "Human beings treated like mass products ... [and] nations denying each other the right to exist."<sup>289</sup> De Lange therefore concludes: "Within the space of a single year, his close confrontation with this twentieth-century Europe seemed to have robbed Bonhoeffer of any faith in the power of the classical humanist values with which he had been raised."<sup>290</sup>

It thus becomes clear that even his strong theological reservations did not keep him from a process of learning which was led by, as Lehmann put it, a "unersättliche Neugierde für jede neue Wirklichkeit."<sup>291</sup> Once again we noticed that this turning "zum Wirklichen" coincided with genuine "Grenzerfahrungen", those moments where, as Bonhoeffer's own hermeneutical reflections indicated, it is no longer important "was es für uns ist als was es in sich ist." There is no doubt that his various friendships facilitated just that, encounters of "Fremdheit als Komplementarität", decisive moments of seeing oneself and the "other" from a perspective other than one's own. And as much as Bonhoeffer's observations also conveyed phraseological thinking in terms of constructing difference as "Gegenbild" and "Ergänzung", the reality of the "other" managed to make profound claims on him, challenging him to revisist his own prejudice and stereotypes. College life, Union's theological seminars and practical excursions, presentations, Sunday services, Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church - they all became important meeting places with the cultural "other". Each encounter provided him with a different experience of "Wirklichkeitsnähe". His turning "zum Wirklichen" therefore not only included a better understanding of the American and Afro-American "other". It also confronted him with the challenge of developing a theology that would be able to respond to the socio-political challenges and in particular the destructive power of racism.

Bonhoeffer's cousin von Hase, who later also became a candidate of the same exchange programme, therefore rightly maintains that Bonhoeffer has in fact learnt more from his struggle with pragmatism and behaviorism than he himself would have acknowledged. For he is said to have learnt "was der deutschen Theologie an

Wirklichkeitsnähe fehlte und welche echten theologischen Fragen hinter den ethischen und gesellschaftspolitischen Herausforderungen der Kirchen standen.”<sup>292</sup> It is in this sense that his American encounters offered a fresh perspective on his own heritage and can be seen to have deepened his quest for the visibility and concrete reality of God’s revelation. It is seen to have enhanced his passion for reality, “for becoming incarnate, for *living* the Christian life and not merely talking about it ...”<sup>293</sup> Niebuhr and Baillie noticed a clear change, in particular in his relationship to politics: “He felt that political questions on which our students were so interested were on the whole irrelevant to the life of a Christian. Shortly after his return to Germany he became very much interested in ethical and political issues ... Once very unpolitical, he became a very astute political analyst.”<sup>294</sup> In fact, at the end of 1932 one notices a stronger interest in political questions that also affected his theological work.<sup>295</sup> His papers and sermons of 1931 and 1932 reflect a concern with the growing unemployment rate and problems of poverty and malnutrition. Bethge also clearly traces this change of mind and attitude back to the influence of his American sojourn: “Eine bloße Schreibtischexistenz war seitdem für Bonhoeffer fragwürdig geworden. Bisher unbezweifelte Denk- und Gefühlswelten standen plötzlich als Einseitigkeiten da. Sie waren zu überprüfen.”<sup>296</sup> Peck on the other hand draws a link between his practical discoveries in America and his later views on secularism, on the race issue in Germany, and his critique of religion:

His conception of the world come of age may have reflected the *de jure* openness to history and newness implicit in American pluralism. His response to the tragedy of racial oppression in America may have carried over into the alertness and passion with which he fought against the “Aryan Paragraph” in the Germany of 1933 and after. Some particularly vivid encounters with sentimental versions of American religion probably fed into the rejection of “religion” in the prison letters.<sup>297</sup>

It is especially, as Peck put it, the “shock of seeing the phenomenon of religion in its utter partiality and provinciality against the background of a heavily secularized society” which helped Bonhoeffer to see the provinciality of his own Lutheran church.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* XXXI, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 263.

<sup>2</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 263.

<sup>3</sup> Frits De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," in *Bonhoeffer's Ethics. Old Europe and New Frontiers*, ed. Guy Carter, René van Eyden, Hans-Dirk van Hoogstraten, and Jurjen Wiersma (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1991), 83.

<sup>4</sup> Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 1967, 8 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 182.

<sup>5</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 182.

<sup>6</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 184.

<sup>7</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262. Bonhoeffer's letters reveal "ein sehr deutsches und sehr kritisches Amerikabild. Die Texte mögen daher auch aufschlußreich sein für eine Amerikanistik, die das deutsche Amerikabild vor dem Umbruch des Jahres 1933 untersucht." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggeline and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 6. For a more in depth study of German travel writing on America see Peter J Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Internationales Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte der Deutschen Literatur, ed. Wolfgang Frühwald and , no. 2. Sonderheft (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1990), 609f.. Brenner notes: "In der Zeit der Wirtschaftskrise seit 1929 wird das deutsche Bild der USA immer düsterer." Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 622. It is interesting to highlight that in one aspect at least Bonhoeffer does not form part of what is described as widely shared "Ressentiments gegen die Schwarzen ..., die besonders im Aufnehmen und Weitergeben von rassistischen Sexualstereotypen manifest werden." Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 623.

<sup>8</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 183.

<sup>9</sup> Diestel's attempts to find a place for Bonhoeffer in America via the Akademische Austauschdienst was supported by Oberkirchenrat Schreiber from the Kirchenbundesamt and Deißmann, who wrote the letters of recommendation about which Bethge notes: "Neben der ausgezeichneten Promotion heben die Referenzen stereotyp die guten Umgangsformen des Empfohlenen hervor." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 180.

<sup>10</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 180. In this sense the comments of a prior candidate, Johannes Schattenmann, were not very encouraging: "Jawohl, so sei es; man müsse als einfacher Student hinübergehen, sich dem 'credit-system' unterwerfen und die genügende Punktezahl mit Vorlesungen, Seminaren und reports erreichen, das verlange sogar die amerikanische Konsulatsstelle, welche das Visum erteilt. Bonhoeffer möge sich einen deutschen Gymnasialbetrieb vorstellen, damit er aus seinen deutschen akademischen Freiheitsvorstellungen heraus nicht allzu enttäuscht sei. Auf Bonhoeffers Gebiet der Systematik gebe es natürlich gar nichts zu lernen. Eigentlich lohne sich nur das *Union Theological Seminary* in New York, weil dort soviel anderes geboten werde. Aber es könne passieren, daß einem ein Platz in Hartford oder in St. Louis zugewiesen würde; ja, selbst in Princeton herrsche noch die Orthodoxie des 17. Jahrhunderts. Der Gewährmann riet Bonhoeffer, doch zu warten, bis er als Professor hinüberfahren könne." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 180.

<sup>11</sup> Diestel wrote to Oberregierungsrat Morsbach from the akademischen Austauschdienst on 11.1.30: "Ich habe ihm geraten, da er noch jung ist ..., sich zunächst noch weiter in der Welt umzusehen ... Wenn es sich einrichten läßt, möchte ich ihn im Frühjahr auf einige Monate nach England schicken, einerseits der Sprache wegen, andererseits ... daß die jungen Leute, die nach Amerika gehen, eine lebendige

Anschauung von den verschiedenen College-Systemen und den dortigen wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsmethoden gewinnen." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 179-80.

<sup>12</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 179. Bethge mentions how once again Bonhoeffer's older brothers paved the way: "Wieder waren ihm die älteren Bruder voraus gewesen, da sich diesen bereits die westliche Welt aufgetan hatte. Karl-Friedrich folgte 1929 amerikanischen Vortragseinladungen. Klaus brachte zum Studium internationaler Rechtsfragen einige Monate in England zu." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 179. Bonhoeffer writes to his brother Karl-Friedrich from Philadelphia: "Ich wandle hier in Deinen Fußstapfen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 199.

<sup>13</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 180.

<sup>14</sup> But as Bethge illustrates, there was not a great deal on the market in view of the latter one: "Einiges hatte ihm Diestel zukommen lassen. 1929 erschien von dem jungen W.A. Visser't Hooft 'The Background of the Social Gospel'. Hermann Sasse, damals uniierter Pfarrer in Berlin, schrieb über Theologie und Kirchentum in Amerika." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 181. And also in view of Bonhoeffer's own theological convictions there was not much evidence that it had much impact in America: "Wohl hatte E. Brunner, 1919/29 selber einmal Austausch-Student, Vortragsreihen in Amerika gehalten; sie erschienen 1929 bei Scribner in New York unter dem bedenklich fixierenden Titel 'Theology of crisis'. Douglas Horton veröffentlichte 1928 zum ersten Mal eine Übersetzung von Barth-unter dem zutreffenderen Titel 'The word of God and the word of Man' (The Pilgrim Press); der Verleger hatte übrigens darauf bestanden, daß keinesfalls das Wort 'Theologie' im Titel erscheinen dürfe, da es für den Buchhandel eine unmögliche Vokabel darstelle. Brunners Buchtitel ist entgegen dem von Horton im Bewußtsein der Amerikaner haften geblieben und verhängnisvollerweise damals in Amerika zum Etikett für Barths Anliegen geworden." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 181.

<sup>15</sup> There one apparently finds the following list of notes which prove Bonhoeffer's concern to be also politically prepared: "Argumente zur Kriegsschuldfrage; der Wortlaut des berühmten Artikels 231 des Versailler Vertrags von der alleinigen Kriegsschuld Deutschlands; amerikanische und französische Stimmen gegen diesen Artikel ..." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 181.

<sup>16</sup> Root continues: "This war is a war between the civilization of this country and the semicivilization of the past ... Most of the Germans have become unclean and will have to walk in the world as a marked people, avoided, despised, stoned ... We are now in this war to save our country from being overrun by barbarism. We are trying to save the infants from being dangled on the bayonet as was done in Belgium." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 181.

<sup>17</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 181-82.

<sup>18</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 182. On 21 January 1931 he writes to his sister Sabine Leibholz: "Über die politischen Zustände in Deutschland wird hier viel gesprochen und zwar besonders in akademischen Kreisen mit sehr viel Sympathie. Ein Wirtschaftsprofessor von Columbia University sagte mir, er habe keine Zweifel, daß Amerika in absehbarer Zeit eine erhebliche Änderung der Reparationsfrage herbeiführen werde." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 227.

<sup>19</sup> This is not surprising given the centrality it also had around the years 1929 and 1930 in Christian circles in Germany: "Dieser Vertrag war 1929 und 1939 auch in Kreisen des Weltbundes für Freundschaftsarbeit der Kirchen innerhalb Deutschlands noch das schmerzendste Thema. Ein von nationalistischen Vorurteilen so freier Mann wie Siegmund-Schultze formulierte auf der Weltbundtagung in Kassel 1929: 'Dieser Krieg hatte unser deutsches Volk zum Frieden erzogen, dieser Frieden hat es zum Krieg erzogen.' Martin Rade, der Herausgeber der 'Christlichen Welt', der doch keineswegs bei der politischen Rechten zu stehen wünschte, zollte diesem Satz von Siegmund-Schultze ausdrücklich Beifall." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 182.

<sup>20</sup> Bethge notes in this respect: "Der Katalog des Seminar von 1929/30 enthält noch keine einzige Dissertation oder These, die von der 'Theologie der Krise' berührt wäre; der von 1931/32 dagegen nennt zum ersten Mal ein Dissertationsthema, das die 'new situation' anzeigt: 'The theology of Schleiermacher and the challenge of the theology of crisis'. Im 'Union' saß eben doch die Avantgarde, nicht in den von konfessionellen Kirchenkörpern getragenen Seminaren." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 196.

<sup>21</sup> Baillie explains: "It [the Barthian movement] was late in reaching America ... It so happened that, I think in the year 1933, it was my turn to read a paper at a social meeting of the Faculty of Union Seminary, and I called my paper 'A Preface to Barthianism'. I was not indeed anything that could be called a Barthian myself, but there were those among my colleagues who could see no significance at



all in them movement, and I was bold enough to think that I understood something of what it portended ... Bonhoeffer was my student in this Seminary in 1930/31 and was then the most convinced disciple of Dr. Barth that had appeared among us up to that time, and withall as stout an opponent of liberalism as had ever come my way." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 195-96.

<sup>22</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> "Man hat hier ziemlich stark das Gefühl, Exponent zu sein und das ist nicht durchaus angenehm." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 207.

<sup>24</sup> Ortfried Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schöffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 25.

<sup>25</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192.

<sup>26</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 193.

<sup>27</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 25-26.

<sup>28</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 193.

<sup>29</sup> Bethge highlights Bonhoeffer's lasting friendship with these four seminarians: "Im späteren Kirchenkampf konnte Bonhoeffer manche Freundschaften aus seiner Studienzeit schroff abbrechen; die aus der Zeit im *Union Theological Seminary* aber hielten. Vier Freunde, die 1930/31 in USA gewann, haben in seinem Leben eine bedeutende Rolle gespielt, zwei Amerikaner und zwei Europäer." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 189.

<sup>30</sup> Zemer, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary."

<sup>31</sup> Zemer, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 273. Zemer goes on to explain: "... in the past scholars have not emphasized the existence of such friendships as an emerging pattern for Bonhoeffer's future growth and creativity. The human interaction with these men proved both stimulating and supportive for Bonhoeffer. The evocative and responsive features of each of these relationships must have encouraged Bonhoeffer consciously to blend ideas and actions." Zemer, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 275.

<sup>32</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 27.

<sup>33</sup> "Dieser Bericht wurde von B[onhoeffer] am 25.8.1931 ... an das Kirchenbundesamt geschickt ..." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 262, footnote 1.

<sup>34</sup> Bonhoeffer explains: "Aus der Überfülle der Eindrücke, die ein jeder Tag neu brachte, kann ich hier nur einige wenige mir wesentlich scheinende herausgreifen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 263.

<sup>35</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 194. Bethge explains: "Einst ein presbyterianisches College, hatte es um die Jahrhundertwende seine Gründungssatzung auf den Charakter eines interdenominationellen Seminars abgeändert und war zum Anziehungspunkt für die fortschrittlichsten liberalen Geister geworden. Damit hatte es aber auch das Mißtrauen fundamentalistischer Kirchen auf sich gezogen, von deren Zöglingen freilich nicht wenige – oft gegen den Willen ihrer Oberen – auf diese attraktive Hochschule gingen ..." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 193-94.

<sup>36</sup> "Die Leitung hatte H.S. Coffin inne, ein 'Church statesman' im besten Sinne und großer Prediger der zentralen *Presbyterian Church* in der Madison Avenue. Coffin's Fakultät vereinigte eine Reihe bedeutender Namen. W.A. Brown, aus einer Bankiersfamilie kommend, Ritschlianer und damals der führende Ökumeniker, hatte zu der Zeit gerade sein Sabbatjahr; Bonhoeffer traf ihn aber bald auf den ökumenischen Konferenzen. James Moffat aus Glasgow lehrte Kirchengeschichte. Reinhold Niebuhr war 1928 zum Professor 'of applied Christianity' ernannt worden. John Baillie tat sein Ordinariat für systematische Theologie 1930 mit einem Vortrag über 'The logic of religion' an; P. van Dusen wurde sein Assistent und John Bennet 'instructor'. Fosdick und Sockman, die begehrten Kanzelredner der *Riverside Church* bzw. der Methodistenkirche in der Madison Avenue, lehrten den zeitgemäßen Predigtstil. Der aus dem Rheinland stammende J.A. Bewer unterrichtete 'alttestamentliche Literaturgeschichte'; Bonhoeffer hörte zwar nicht bei ihm, freundete sich aber mit ihm an und hat in ihm 1939 einen guten Ratgeber für seine große Entscheidung gefunden." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 194.

<sup>37</sup> "Dieses Stipendium hatte 1920 eine Mrs. William Sloane gestiftet, zunächst für die Jahresresidenz eines Franzosen bestimmt, dann auf drei 'Europäer' erweitert. Zu J. Lasserres Vorgängern gehörten der Kriegsdienstverweigerer Vernier, von dem Bonhoeffer später seinen Studenten gelegentlich erzählt hat, Jézéquel und Charles Monod, nachmals führende französische Ökumeniker. Bonhoeffer waren der Bayer

Johannes Schattenmann und der Württemberger Erich Eichele vorangegangen; seine Nachfolger wurden Hans Stroh und der Vetter Hans-Christoph von Hase (1933/34)." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 194.

<sup>38</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 262-63.

<sup>39</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 263.

<sup>40</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 195.

<sup>41</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 235-36.

<sup>42</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 221.

<sup>43</sup> One evening there were 97 different nations represented in the "Internationale Studienhaus" opposite the seminar Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 207. Indeed, Bonhoeffer positive remarks were not without some reservations: "Ehe man all die 300 Leute kennengelernt hat, ist ein Jahr schon um. Nur ist es meist so, daß bei den Unterhaltungen nicht sehr viel herauskommt. Man hat immer das Gefühl, man redet mit Primanern." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 207.

<sup>44</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 207.

<sup>45</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 194.

<sup>46</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 263.

<sup>47</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 263.

<sup>48</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 263.

<sup>49</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 264.

<sup>50</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 264.

<sup>51</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 264.

<sup>52</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 264.

<sup>53</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 264.

<sup>54</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 264. Bethge hereby notes: "Heute sieht auch das Vorlesungsverzeichnis des Union Theological Seminary theologisch gründlicher aus. Wahrscheinlich setzt man nunmehr voraus, daß jene allgemeinen Themen schon auf der High School und im College traktiert worden sind. 'Theologie' ist stärker im Zentrum der Graduate School gerückt, obwohl das 'social gospel' keineswegs in Vergessenheit geraten ist." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 197.

<sup>55</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 220.

<sup>56</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 220.

<sup>57</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>58</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 221.

<sup>59</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 221.

<sup>60</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 264-65.

<sup>61</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 265.

<sup>62</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 265.

<sup>63</sup> While Bonhoeffer himself fulfilled the credits needed to complete the Sacred Theology Master's course, he decided not to do the final exams. Bethge list the following courses: "Religion and Ethics (Niebuhr) – Religious aspects of contemporary philosophy (Lyman) – Church and Community: The cooperation of the Church with social and character building Agencies (Webber) – Ethical interpretations (Ward und Niebuhr) – Ethical issues in the social order (Ward) – Theology I: The idea of God in his relations to the world and man (Baillie) – Seminar in philosophical theology (Baillie und Lyman) – Brief sermons (Fosdick) – The minister's work with individuals (Coffin)." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 197.

<sup>64</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 265.

<sup>65</sup> He begins with giving an overview of the body of lecturers categorizing them along the following spectrum: "Die Professorenschaft des Union Theological Seminary repräsentiert, was der aufgeklärte Amerikaner von Theologie und Kirche verlangt, von der radikalsten Sozialisierung - Prof. Ward und Niebuhr - und philosophischer und organisatorischer Säkularisierung - Prof. Lyman, Prof. Elliot - des Christentums bis zu einer liberalen an Ritschl orientierten Theologie - Prof. Baillie." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 265.

<sup>66</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 198.

<sup>67</sup> Bonhoeffer refers to the following project: "Auf Anregung dieser Gruppe hin hat die Studentenschaft des Union Theological Seminary über den Winter fortlaufend je 30 Arbeitslosen - darunter drei Deutschen - Unterkunft und Verpflegung gewährt und sie so gut wie möglich beraten." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 266.

<sup>68</sup> "Hier fühlt man die Erneuerung des Evangeliums für unsere Tage und erweckt daran ein starkes Selbstgefühl, in dem man über etwaige 'theologische' Einwände ziemlich rasch hinweggehen zu dürfen glaubt. ... Es darf aber nicht ungesagt bleiben, daß die theologische Bildung dieser Gruppe gleich Null ist und die Selbstsicherheit, aus der heraus über jede spezifisch theologische Fragestellung leise gelächelt wird, ungerechtfertigt und naiv ist." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 266.

<sup>69</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 266.

<sup>70</sup> "Die gesamte Kritik kommt aus einem gewissen aufklärerischen Rationalismus heraus, den man glaubt, der Wahrhaftigkeit schuldig zu sein. Das Faktum einer innertheologischen Kritik ist völlig unbekannt und unverstanden. Die dogmatische Prinzipienlehre ist heillos in Verwirrung. In diesem Kreis interessiert man sich zwar für K. Barth; aber die Voraussetzungen sind dermaßen unzulänglich, daß ein Verständnis der Sache fast ausgeschlossen ist." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 266.

<sup>71</sup> Bethge describes Baillie as a "wacher Mann, der sich auf dem Laufenden hielt. Er ließ sich von Bonhoeffer auch ausführlich über Heidegger unterrichten und sorgte dafür, daß Bonhoeffers Seminararbeit 'Concerning the Christian Idea of God' im 'Journal of Religion' gedruckt wurde." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 197. At one occasion Baillie invited Bonhoeffer to a conference on systematic theology which Bonhoeffer comments on as follows to his grandmother Julie Bonhoeffer: "Die Diskussionen waren aber dermaßen unbefriedigend, wirklich fast wie Diskussionen von Studenten in den ersten Semestern, daß ich noch ganz niedergeschlagen bin. Es herrscht so eine maßlose Verwirrung und Unklarheit." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 252.

<sup>72</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 434-49.

<sup>73</sup> "Hier focht Bonhoeffer, durch Paul Lehmann unterstützt, seine Kämpfe aus. Baillie konnte sich wahrscheinlich kaum vorstellen, wie positiv Bonhoeffer eben noch in seinem Nachruf für Harnack von diesem großen Ritschl-Schüler geredet hatte, dem er, Baillie, anhing. Und er wußte nichts von Bonhoeffers eigenen kritischen Fragen an Barth, wie sie gerade in 'Akt und Sein' formuliert worden waren. Ja, Bonhoeffer unterschlug diese Kritik so vollständig, daß man ihm in seinen *essays* für das Seminar heute nachweisen kann, wie weit er im summierenden Eifer sogar eigene Theologumena in die Darstellung Barths untermischt und solche – vielleicht ohne sich dessen bewußt zu sein – als Barths Meinung ausgegeben hat." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 196.

<sup>74</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 435.

<sup>75</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 440.

<sup>76</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 443.

<sup>77</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 445.

<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 445.

<sup>79</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 445.

<sup>80</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 445.

<sup>81</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 446.

<sup>82</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 446.

<sup>83</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 447-48.

<sup>84</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 235.

<sup>85</sup> "In dem ersten der beiden Europäer fand er einen Bundesgenossen, wenn er an die Sisyphusarbeit ging, die Theologie des Alten Europas im Hörsaal der Neuen Welt zu interpretieren. Erwin Sutz, der Schweizer, wußte, woher das Unbehagen des Freundes rührte und wohin seine Argumente zielten. Darüber hinaus verband beide eine gemeinsame pianistische Leidenschaft. Sie empfahlen sich gegenseitig in New York dorthin, wo man zum Musizieren willkommen war. Sie hörten zusammen Toscanini, den der verwöhnte Berliner Konzertbesucher gar nicht als so einzigartig empfand. Sutz bestaunte amüsiert, daß jemand soviel Geld für die Familienkontakte dem *Post Office* und der *Western Union* in den Rachen zu werfen bereit war: immerzu waren Glückwünsche auszurichten oder Berufs- und Krankheitssorgen der offenbar unübersehbar verzweigten Verwandtschaft zu besprechen. Erwin Sutz gebührt der Verdienst, endlich die persönliche Verbindung zwischen Bonhoeffer und Karl Barth zustande gebracht zu haben. Sutz hatte selbst bei diesem und bei Brunner studiert. Zwischen den Freunden kam außerhalb des Hörsaals zur Sprache, was Bonhoeffer seinen amerikanischen Mitstudenten eigentlich gänzlich verschwiegen, nämlich seine kritischen Anfragen an Barth. Sutz zögerte nicht lange, seinen neuen Freund bei Barth in Bonn anzumelden. So hat Bonhoeffer vor seiner endgültigen Heimkehr nach Berlin 1931 gute zwei Wochen in Bonn zugebracht und zum ersten Mal den Mann getroffen, der ihn am ernsthaftesten zur Sache der Theologie gerufen hat. Sutz war es auch,

der Bonhoeffer bei Emil Brunner einführte. Im Kriege wurde er schließlich Bonhoeffers wichtige und verlässliche Kontaktstelle zum verschlossenen Westen." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 189-90.

<sup>86</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 198. Bethge also mentions the following points of disagreement: "Es verwirrte die Professoren, wenn Bonhoeffer in seinen Seminararbeiten immer erst Offenbarungstheologie, Rechtfertigungslehre und Eschatologie abhandelte und nicht recht bei den sogenannten Realitäten ankam. Vor allem Niebuhr und Baillie machten sich die Mühe, die verzwickten und herausfordernden Arbeiten ihres deutschen Gastes mit Glossen zu versehen. Baillie monierte die deutsche Vorliebe für unmögliche Begriffsverbindungen wie 'revelation in hiddenness': 'Is it not a perverse expression?'" Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 198.

<sup>87</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 198.

<sup>88</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 198. Interestingly, when Bonhoeffer re-visited America's theological scene in 1939 he discovered "daß seit seinem einstigen Auftreten tatsächlich etwas aufgebrochen war – durch eben die Leute, mit denen er damals gestritten hatte, darunter auch Reinhold Niebuhr. Freilich schien es ihm immer noch mehr die 'Theologie der Krise' zu sein als eine neue Leidenschaft für die Theologie des Wortes. Der Name deckt die Sache." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 197.

<sup>89</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 26.

<sup>90</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 26.

<sup>91</sup> Especially revealing are Lyman's handwritten marginal comments on the first draft of Bonhoeffer's essay, "Concerning the Christian Idea of God" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 423-33. Lyman's marginal notes were incisive and insistent: "without ideas there is no such things as decision;" "rather, without thinking little or no reality can be given." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 274-75. While acknowledging Bonhoeffer's penetrating critique of idealistic philosophy, Lyman modified Bonhoeffer's harsh, Lutheran stress on human sinfulness. In response to Bonhoeffer's assertion that "no religion, no ethics, no metaphysical knowledge may serve man to approach God," Lyman argued: "Men remain sinful, but it is *irreligion, unethical conduct, and failure to seek truth which is sin.*" In a similar vein, a professorial comment on another essay (apparently signed with Reinhold Niebuhr's initials) criticizes Bonhoeffer's over-emphasis on grace: "Obedience to God's will may be a religious experience but it is not an ethical one until it issues in actions that can be socially valued." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 276.

<sup>92</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 266-67.

<sup>93</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 423-33.

<sup>94</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 424.

<sup>95</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 426.

<sup>96</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 426.

<sup>97</sup> "Der Blickpunkt, von dem aus man auf enlargement of membership und auf religious education dringt, ist wesentlich gefangen im Organisatorischen. Das fast ängstliche Propagieren moderner Methoden verrät auch hier das Dahinschwinden des Gehalts, von dem diese Fragen als sekundäre deutlich abgehoben sein sollten. Die unwürdige Subalternität, mit der amerikanische Pfarrer nicht selten organisieren und missionieren, läßt die Souveränität eines Menschen, der weiß, um welchen Gehalt es sich hier handelt, völlig vermissen. Von der Harmlosigkeit, mit der Leute, die unmittelbar vor, teils schon im Pfarramt stehen in dem praktisch-theologischen Seminar fragen – so etwa, ob man eigentlich von Christus predigen müsse –, kann man sich hier schwerlich eine Vorstellung machen. Schließlich wird man mit einigem Idealismus und einiger Schlaueit auch mit dieser Sache schon fertig werden – das ist so etwa die Stimmung. Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 267.

<sup>98</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 267.

<sup>99</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 268.

<sup>100</sup> "Die theologische Literatur der liberalen und humanistischen Richtung wies dieselben eigenartigen Denkformen auf, über die ich mir nicht Rechenschaft geben konnte. Man beobachtete ein rasches Vorüberziehen an schwierigen Problemen und ein langes Verweilen bei Dingen, die entweder selbstverständlich oder aber so ohne weiteres Vorarbeiten gar nicht zu bewältigen sind." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 268.

<sup>101</sup> "Wir begannen mit dem Pragmatismus. Ich lass fast das gesamte philosophische Werk von William James, das mich ungemein fesselte, dann Dewey, Perry, Russell und schließlich noch J.B. Watson und

die behavioristische Diskussionsliteratur. Das Studium von Whitehead, Knuson, Santayana war für mich bei weitem nicht so aufschlußreich als diese radikal empirischen Denker." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 268-69. See also his short seminar talk on "James: Varieties of religious experiences chapter XX" in Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 408-10.

<sup>102</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 269. Bonhoeffer explains in this respect: "Die Destruktion der Philosophie als Frage nach der Wahrheit zur positiven Einzelwissenschaft mit praktischer Abzielung - wie sie am radikalsten von Dewey vollzogen wird - verändert den Wissenschaftsbegriff in seinem Kern und die Wahrheit als absolute Norm alles Denkens erfährt ihre Begrenzung durch das, was sich 'in the long run as useful' erweist. Denken ist wesentlich teleologisch, intentional auf das Leben. Da würden wir nicht bestreiten, nur die Aufweisbarkeit dieser Intentionalität würden wir infragestellen. Fragen, wie die kantische Erkenntnisfrage, sind 'nonsense', sie sind kein Problem, weil sie das Leben nicht weiterführen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 269.

<sup>103</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 269.

<sup>104</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 269.

<sup>105</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 269. But he also notes how one would need to distinguish between James' own approach and his later reception: "Der Reichtum der James'schen Beobachtungen auf religiösem Gebiet ist später durch sein eigenes Thema verengt worden. Während James der realen Existenz Gottes außerhalb des Menschen immer noch Raum lassen will, ist besonders in Chicago der Pragmatismus von James und der Instrumentalismus Deweys zum radikalen immanenten ethischen Humanismus weitergeführt worden." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 269-70.

<sup>106</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 270.

<sup>107</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 270, footnote 16.

<sup>108</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 270.

<sup>109</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 270.

<sup>110</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 270.

<sup>111</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 271.

<sup>112</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 270-71.

<sup>113</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 276.

<sup>114</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 276.

<sup>115</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 276.

<sup>116</sup> Bonhoeffer refers in this respect to a particular worship experience: "... am Karfreitag hörte ich einen von New Yorks großen Predigern in einer Episcopal Church (!) sagen: 'ich leugne die Versöhnung am Kreuz, ich will keinen solchen Christus', (man beachte das 'ich') - und mit der man drauflos handelt; Kirche ist nun wirklich nicht mehr die Stelle, an der die Gemeinde Gottes Wort hört und predigt, sondern sie erhält sekundäre Bedeutung als Gesellschaftskörper für diesen oder jenen Zweck. Es ist darum auch nicht wichtig Dogmatik zu studieren das versteht sich doch beim persönlich ernstesten Christen alles von selbst und man verschärft nur unnötig die Gegensätze. Wer irgendwie sagen will, daß er sich irgendwie zu Christus bekennt, der ist ein Christ und kann Mitglied der kirchlichen Gesellschaft werden." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 277.

<sup>117</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 277. The consequences are listed as follows: "Anstelle des Priestertums der Gläubigen steht das Recht des Vereinsmitgliedes und anstelle des rite vocatus steht der Pfarrer als Vereinsvorsitzener, der von dem Willen der Mitglieder doch wesentlich abhängig ist. Die Auswüchse und Karikaturen eines mißverstandenen Freiwilligkeitskirchentums kann man in Amerika in Reinkultur studieren." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 277.

<sup>118</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 277.

<sup>119</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 277.

<sup>120</sup> And yet Bethge maintains: "Regelmäßiger Besucher der Morgengottesdienste im Seminar ist Bonhoeffer damals nicht gewesen." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 194-95.

<sup>121</sup> "Both Schade and Lehmann remember Bonhoeffer's respect for the financial commitment American churchgoers made to support their ministers, churches, and charities without governmental assistance." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 277, footnote 82. "Although he recognized the danger of the church being just another social club, he was still moved by Christians willingness to sacrifice for the gospel and the faith. Here may lie at least some sources for *The Cost of Discipleship* and for his prison vision of the future

church." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 277.

<sup>122</sup> Referring to the 13 and 27 October 1930 editions he quotes: "'Science found void compared to faith', 'Virtues stressed', 'New freedom', 'Holmes denounces Curry and Walker', 'Stockdale scores wet candidacies', 'Call praises theaters', 'H. urges spiritual values', '... puts needs above creeds'. ... '... wants liquor sold only in churches', 'prohibition betrayed', '... asks church to act in social problems'. 'Dr. Fosdick holds creeds hide Jesus', 'Dr. Coffin decries naturalism'." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 271.

<sup>123</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272. Bonhoeffer is critical of the inherent claim, "als handle es sich in dieser Einheitlichkeit der Predigt um die Einheit des Geistes Christi." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272. He is astounded to find this similar style of preaching in the most different places: "in einer Community Church - die keine 'christliche' Kirche ist -, wie in einer Synagoge - z.B. bei dem hervorragenden Prediger Rabbi Wise wie in einer Methodist oder Baptist Church. (In der Episcopal und Presbyterian Church, der Kirche der höhern Stände, hört man mehr Apologetik als politische Diskussion.)" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272. But what seems to be more upsetting is the fact that it is not viewed with suspicion, but to the contrary interpreted as progressive. In contrast fundamentalistic preaching - so representative of the Southern States, is seen to have only one excellent baptist representative, "der vor Gläubigen und Neugierigen die Auferstehung des Fleisches und die Jungfrauengeburt predigt." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272.

<sup>124</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272.

<sup>125</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272.

<sup>126</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272.

<sup>127</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 273. Bonhoeffer goes into great detail to describe the week's programme of a church: "Wer ein Wochenprogramm einer der großen New Yorker Kirchen gesehen hat, mit ihren täglichen, ja fast stündlichen Ereignissen, Tees, Vorträgen, Konzerten, Wohltätigkeitsveranstaltungen, Sport- Spiel- Kegel- Tanzgelegenheiten für jedes Alter, wer gehört hat, wie man einem Neuzugezogenen zuredet der Kirche beizutreten, da man doch dort ganz anders in die Gesellschaft hinein komme, wer die peinliche Nervosität kennen gelernt hat, mit der der Pfarrer für membership wirbt, der kann den Charakter einer solchen Kirche einigermaßen einschätzen. Es geht in diesen Dingen natürlich verschieden takt- und geschmackvoll und verschieden ernsthaft zu, es gibt wesentlich 'wohltätige' Kirchen und solche, die wesentlich im Gesellschaftlichen aufgehen ..." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 272-73.

<sup>128</sup> "In den fortschrittlichen werden die neuen Methoden der religious education entschlossen angewandt, in der Mehrzahl der andern ist schon die äußere Ordnung der Liturgie und des Unterrichts derartig mangelhaft und langweilig, daß die Lahmheit des inneren Lebens durch ein Vielerlei kleiner Attraktionen ersetzt werden muß. Wenn ich mitansah, wie ein zwölfjähriges Mädchen in einer Methodist Sunday School als Auszeichnung für regelmäßigen Besuch eine Schmink- und Puderbüchse geschenkt bekam und der Pastor auf diese Anpassung an die Gegenwart stolz war, so ist das ein übles Symptom radikaler Ungesundheit." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 273.

<sup>129</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 273.

<sup>130</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 273.

<sup>131</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 273. Bonhoeffer's appraisal of the German churches is also very critical: "Es gibt keine rein deutsche Kirche mehr in New York und soviel ich weiß, auch nicht in Amerika. In der lutheran church und der evangelischen synod wird noch deutsch gepredigt. Meine Erfahrungen in New York wie auch in Florida und im westlichen Süden mit dieser Predigt waren ziemlich trübe. Die Pastoren haben gewöhnlich keine gute Vorbildung; soweit sie vom Concordia Seminary (das ich in St. Louis besichtigt habe), d.h. aus der Missouri Synod kommen, sind sie in ihrer exklusiven Orthodoxie unerträglich und trotz größter finanzieller Opfer zweifellos auf dem Wege zum Zusammenbruch. Sonst habe ich vielfach beobachtet, daß zum deutschen Gottesdienst nur einige wenige alte Leute kamen, Junge gar garnicht. Das liegt einerseits an sprachlichen Gründen, zum andern aber daran, daß man mit einer vorgelesenen Predigt etwa von Ahlfeldt nicht den Anspruch erheben kann, auf den jungen Amerikaner Eindruck zu machen. Von einem besonderen Verständnis des reformatorischen Besitzes in den deutschen Kirchen habe ich nichts verspürt." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 275.

<sup>132</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 274.

<sup>133</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 274.

<sup>134</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 275. At the Abyssinian Baptist Church it was the elder Powell who "embodied the rigorous revival-style preaching Bonhoeffer found impressive ... Power Sr. learned this spirit-filled approach to the holy as a child, from the newly emancipated slaves. (Remember, Powell was born in 1865)." Josiah Ulysses Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 117.

<sup>135</sup> Andreas Pangritz, "Who is Jesus Christ, for Us, Today?" in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. John W. De Gruchy, Cambridge Companions To Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 144.

<sup>136</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 274.

<sup>137</sup> Alber Frankling Fisher "came from a distinctive type of black southern aristocracy." He "was the only child of a distinguished Baptist minister who had resigned from a successful pastorate in Birmingham, Alabama, to become Dean of the Theology Department of Alabama's Selma University. Known as 'Frank' to his Union Seminary friends, he displayed 'intellectual interest and curiosity and had real conceptual power,' according to Paul Lehmann, in addition to being 'handsome, suave, and polished.'" Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 273.

<sup>138</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 282. Bonhoeffer was aware of the problem of black otherness early on: "Mary Bosanquet's *The Life and Death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* reveals that the preadolescent Bonhoeffer 'read a few books repeatedly, until he knew them almost by heart.' One of them was 'a translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*' – that historic novel that caused a sensation in antebellum America because it was thought to be a shocking exposé of slavery (Bosanquet 1968,31). Yet the novel does not reflect an understanding of the genuine alterity that Bonhoeffer discusses in *The Communion of Saints*." Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 90. "In retrospect, though, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* may have been a fitting way to introduce young Bonhoeffer to the problem he would encounter in his late twenties. As has been brought out by the literary critic, John W. Ward, the novel focuses on slavery as the true measure of what is wrong with society, 'a society breaking up into discrete, atomistic individuals where human beings, white or black, can find no secure relation one with another.'" Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 91.

<sup>139</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192. Bethge notes: "Ihn selbst hat er nicht wieder treffen können, so wie die drei anderen. Fisher, zuletzt Professor in Atlanta/Georgia, ist 1960 gestorben." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192.

<sup>140</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 273.

<sup>141</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 273.

<sup>142</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 191.

<sup>143</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 191-92.

<sup>144</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 191-92. Paul and Marion Lehmann also recollect "Dietrich's sensitivity in planning for his farewell dinner; he called several restaurants beforehand to find one that would accommodate a black in company with white patrons." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 273, footnote 63.

<sup>145</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 267.

<sup>146</sup> Bethge notes: "Er beteiligte sich an gesteuerten Studientagen, 'trip to Negro Centres of Life and Culture in Harlem', die mit einem Flug über den Stadtteil anfangen, in welchem 170 000 Farbige auf einer Quadratmeile wohnten." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 189.

<sup>147</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 8.

<sup>148</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192.

<sup>149</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192.

<sup>150</sup> F. Burton Nelson, "The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. John W. De Gruchy, Cambridge Companions To Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31. Bonhoeffer taught a Sunday-school class of junior boys, led a group of women in Bible studies and once a week helped in a weekday religious school: "Mehr als sechs Monate bin ich fast jeden Sonntag mittags um einhalb drei in einer der großen Negro Baptist churches in Harlem gewesen und habe mit meinem Freund zusammen und oft in seiner Vertretung eine Gruppe junger Neger in der Sonntagsschule gehabt; bei den Negerfrauen habe ich Bibelstunden gehalten und habe einmal



wöchentlich in einer weekday church school geholfen. So bin ich nicht nur mit mehreren jungen Negern gut bekannt geworden, sondern bin auch mehrfach in deren Häusern gewesen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 274.

<sup>151</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270. In her attempt to recall the life of the Abyssinian Baptist Church at Bonhoeffer's time Zerner refers to Powell's book *Upon his Rock* first published 1949 in New York. Young notes that Powell's son, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., became "the celebrated master politician and congressman. Under the junior Powell, 'the Abyssinian pulpit became the most politically outspoken in America' ... The elder Powell was born in Virginia in 1865. So Euro-looking that he could have passed for white, Powell could have well fit the bill for James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. Perhaps Bonhoeffer's interest in that novel had to do with the Powells he surely encountered." Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 115.

<sup>152</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270. Zerner notes that Powell "does not specifically refer to Bonhoeffer, but mentions a 'German teacher in the Sunday School.'" Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270.

<sup>153</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270. "Responding to the hunger and unemployment of the grim depression winter of 1930/31, Powell initiated a free food kitchen to supplement the work of the church's relief bureau, which distributed clothing and obtained 633 positions for the jobless." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270.

<sup>154</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 117.

<sup>155</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 117.

<sup>156</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 117.

<sup>157</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 114.

<sup>158</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 115.

<sup>159</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192.

<sup>160</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 58.

<sup>161</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 58-59.

<sup>162</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 275. Later on in his essay "Protestantismus ohne Reformation" Bonhoeffer notes: "Der stärkste Beitrag der Neger für die amerikanische Christenheit liegt in den geistlichen Negerliedern ('Negro spirituals'), in denen Not und Befreiung des Volkes Israel ('Go down, Moses ...'), Elend und Trost des menschlichen Herzens ('Nobody knows the trouble I have seen ...'), die Liebe zum Erlöser und Sehnsucht nach dem Himmelreich ('Swing low, sweet chariot ...') zum ergreifenden Ausdruck kommen." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Dirk Schulz, vol. 15 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 454.

<sup>163</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 249.

<sup>164</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 272. In fact, Bonhoeffer praises the spirituals as belonging "zu den größten künstlerischen Leistungen Amerikas ..." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 224.

<sup>165</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 454.

<sup>166</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 64.

<sup>167</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 87-88.

<sup>168</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 87-88.

<sup>169</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 120.

<sup>170</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 118.

<sup>171</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 269.

<sup>172</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 269. Reflecting on the deep imprint of America's black Christianity on Bonhoeffer Zerner contends: "For those Americans who have experienced what Lehmann describes as 'the spontaneity and unaffected character of black piety,' it is not unusual to learn that in the year following his encounter with black Baptists, Bonhoeffer's piety sometimes appeared too fervent." One Berlin student has recalled the directness and 'simplicity' with which Bonhoeffer 'asked us whether we loved Jesus.' Although his Union Seminary friends have commented on the German roots of a non-sentimental pietist strain in Bonhoeffer, the forthright 1932 query to his students sounds more like Black Baptist



parlance than any pietist phraseology linked to his study of eighteenth-century pietists or his memories of governesses influenced by the ideals of the Moravian Brethren." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 269.

<sup>173</sup> Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann, "Berliner Jahre," in *Begegnungen mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1964), 50.

<sup>174</sup> Kimberly Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," *Semeia* 75 (1996): 117. Rae Connor refers to John Lovell who explains, "the spirituals dealt with all manifestations of life from the all-encompassing religious position of the African ancestral group ..." Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 117-18. Rae Connor continues to explain: "Identifying Afrocentrism as 'a holistic ideology central to all analysis involving African erudition,' Kirk-Duggan's exploration of how the spirituals document the reality of the oppressed and the oppressor in the context of slaveholding America leads her to identify the spirituals as a 'catalog' of 'political and religious Afrocentric experience.' And the kind of Afrocentric perspective displayed in the spirituals is a postcolonial one, because it 'radically critiques an environment that involves a ruling Eurocentric ideology' while fusing it 'with an Afrocentric social and intellectual milieu ...'" Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 118.

<sup>175</sup> Rae Connor explains how "the distinguishing musical aesthetic of the spirituals derives from West African percussive forms, multiple meters, syncopation, a call and response structure, extensive melodic ornamentation, and an integration of song and movement, each involving improvisation. Call and response is most important because it embodies the foundational principle behind the performance of the spirituals, denoting the ritual requirement of what is necessary for completion. The soloist was viewed as a mystic whose call inspired the participating group to respond." Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 118. Young argues in a similar vein: "Exhibiting values and behavior learned from their ancestors, these ex-slaves kept their link to Africa alive. The clapping hands, polyrhythmic but sustained by a metronome sense; the ring-shout, the counterclockwise direction the slaves moved in when they, feeling the holy come on them, danced out a spiritual; the shrieks and moans, the convulsions that occurred when one was leveled by the holy – all were African at bottom." Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 117.

<sup>176</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 107.

<sup>177</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 107. And therefore "to focus on the spirituals as sorrow songs is to miss an appreciation of the full postcolonial context – social and religious – in which they were performed and the insight they lend into the extraordinary power of cultural production to shape the experience and conscious identity of a people. The spirituals are a unique demonstration of one way in which an oppressed people empowered themselves through an aesthetic achievement that challenged the colonial condition to which they were subject. Viewed holistically, the spirituals represent both postcolonial reading and writing practices of the highest order." Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 110.

<sup>178</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 108.

<sup>179</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 107.

<sup>180</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 112.

<sup>181</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 112.

<sup>182</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 124. And yet, the spirituals are seen to "embody more than an artistic othering. They constitute both a postcolonial analysis of the role of the Bible played in slavery and a creative response fashioned out of that analysis." Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 112. Three themes are seen to dominate the spirituals deriving all from the bible as the main

source: "the desire for freedom, the desire for justice, and strategies for survival. God is liberator who is involved in history, and as 'Wade in the Water' suggests, God will 'trouble the water' of oppression." Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 121.

<sup>183</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>184</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 272.

<sup>185</sup> Zimmermann, "Berliner Jahre," 50.

<sup>186</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 17.

<sup>187</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 272.

<sup>188</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270.

<sup>189</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 270.

<sup>190</sup> See our discussion of Bethge's argument in the Literature Survey.

<sup>191</sup> Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 113.

<sup>192</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 275.

<sup>193</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 275.

<sup>194</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 274. Bonhoeffer's first trip took him to Philadelphia as the cradle of the Quaker movement and American parliamentarism. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 187-88.

<sup>195</sup> In a letter to his parents he writes about his sightseeing experience: "Die großen Monumente in Washington, Capitol, Washington Memorial and Lincoln Memorial, die alle in einer Reihe, die nur durch große Rasenflächen getrennt sind, angelegt sind, sind sehr eindrucksvoll. Besonders das Lincoln Memorial ist ungeheuer wuchtig, der Lincoln 10- oder 20mal überlebensgroß, in der Nacht hell beleuchtet, in einer mächtigen Halle, - ich hätte das den Amerikanern eigentlich kaum zugetraut. Übrigens interessiert mich Lincoln überhaupt je mehr ich von ihm höre, desto mehr. Er muß ein ganz ungeheurer Mann gewesen sein. Kennt ihr das Buch von Emil Ludwig über ihn?" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 212.

<sup>196</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 213.

<sup>197</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 213.

<sup>198</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 224.

<sup>199</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 224-25.

<sup>200</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 231-32. Beforehand Karl-Friedrich comments as follows on the situation: "Daß Du Gelegenheit hast, die Negerfrage so gründlich zu studieren, freut mich sehr. Ich hatte drüben den Eindruck, daß es eigentlich die Frage ist, jedenfalls für Leute mit Gewissen, und sie war für mich, wie ich den Ruf nach Harvard bekam, ein ganz wesentlicher Grund für die Abneigung ganz hinüber zu gehen, weil ich diese Erbschaft weder selbst antreten noch meinen hypothetischen Kindern weitergeben wollte. Es ist wirklich nicht zu sehen, wie man es richtig machen soll, und ich glaube daß es hier wie in der Mathematik wirklich unlösbare Probleme gibt. (etwas blöd! merk ich selbst.)" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 231.

<sup>201</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 186.

<sup>202</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 391-92.

<sup>203</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 391-92. Bethge thereby adds: "Bonhoeffer's Urteil irrt sich nur im Zeitpunkt; er hielt an diesem Urteil unverändert fest, als er 1939 immer noch die gleiche Situation vorfand." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 187.

<sup>204</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 278.

<sup>205</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 278.

<sup>206</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 278.

<sup>207</sup> Bonhoeffer lists the following social institutions: "Settlements, YMCA, home missions, cooperative houses, playgrounds, children court, night schools, socialist schools, asyls, youth organisations, Association for advance of coloured people." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 278. Bethge's summary of the excursion undertaken list the following visits: "Arbeiterfragen, Profiteindämmung, Bürgerrechte, Jugendkriminalität und was die Kirchen auf diesen Gebieten taten, das war unter Webbers Anleitung zu erforschen. Man besuchte die *National Trade Union League*

(200/201) und das *Worker's Education Bureau of America*, das aus der klassenbewußten *Worker Education Association* hervorgegangen war. Man ergründete, welche Kirchen sich mit einem eigenen *Education Committee* in diese Arbeit eingeschaltet oder gar eine eigene *Labor School* eingerichtet hatten; die kirchliche Anzeige dafür lautete 'Knowledge is power – only if it is properly applied'. Das *National Child Labor Committee* bekämpfte die Beschäftigung von Kindern in den Betrieben. Fragen wie angemessene Kaufpreise für Arbeiter und eventuelle Käuferstreiks mit Hilfe der Kirchen studierte man bei der zuerst in England gegründeten *Cooperative Movement* und der *National Consumer League*. Ein Tag gehörte der *American Civil Liberty's Union*, die für Rede-, Presse- und Versammlungsfreiheit, für Streikrechte und Rassengleichheit kämpfte. Man war dort gerade mit einer Entscheidung des Bundesgerichts beschäftigt, welche eine Frau das amerikanische Bürgerrecht verweigert hatte, weil sie niemals eine Waffe in die Hand nehmen wollte; dafür sollte die Öffentlichkeit interessiert werden. *Boyscouts* und *Big Brother and Big Sister Movement* interessierten wegen ihrer Erfolge in der Bekämpfung der Jugendkriminalität; man ließ sich berichten, daß allein in Chicago 1313 jugendliche 'Gangs' existierten und nur 7% der von diesen Bewegungen betreuten Jungen rückfällig würden."

Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 200-01.

<sup>208</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 281.

<sup>209</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 278.

<sup>210</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 279.

<sup>211</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 279.

<sup>212</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84.

<sup>213</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 201.

<sup>214</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84. Eberhard Amelung and Christoph Strohm note: "Um die außer Kontrolle geratene Konfirmandenklasse in der Zionsgemeinde am Prenzlauer Berg angemessen begleiten zu können, mietete er zu Neujahr 1932 für drei Monate ein Zimmer im Wohngebiet seiner Schützlinge. Mitunter ging dieses Engagement auch auf Kosten seiner Lehrtätigkeit an der Universität. Bonhoeffer war von der Arbeit mit den Proletariatskindern derart bewegt, daß er sich – allerdings vergeblich – um eine Pfarramt im Berliner Nordosten bewarb, nachdem er die vorgeschriebene Hilfsdienstzeit von einem Jahr abgeleistet hatte. Kurze Zeit später setzte Hitlers Machtübernahme am 30. Januar 1933 der Arbeit in der Jugendstube ein abruptes Ende." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Eberhard Amelung and Christoph Strohm, vol. 11 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 470-71.

<sup>215</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 201. Zerner notes in this respect: "Although Bonhoeffer had theological reservations about the American social gospel, there is no evidence that he ever rejected the attempts to harmonize the Christian man of action with the man of ideas, as manifest in the lives of his two close American friends, Lehmann and Fisher." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 274.

<sup>216</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 274. But Zerner maintains that "Bonhoeffer could not have failed to observe that Lehmann's social and political concern was energetically practiced as well as preached. There was undoubtedly a reciprocity in terms of ideas and life styles; Lehmann admits the possibility of such subterranean influences which in later years emerged in parallel lines of development in both men's writings on ethics." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 274. Bethge notes about Lehmann: "Mit ihm [Lehmann] war zu schwatzen und zu debattieren; er verstand sich auf die Nuancen europäischer Bildung und Theologie. Aus der *Evangelical and Reformed Church* stammend (später schloß er sich den Presbyterianern an), arbeitete Lehmann im *Union Theological Seminary* an seiner Dissertation und hatte eine Stelle als Assistant für systematische Theologie inne. Er konnte ermessen, warum sich Bonhoeffer bei 'theologischen' Äußerungen von Professoren wie Studenten die Haare sträubten: 'Unmöglich!'" Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 192. "Lehmann hat immer darauf gehofft, Bonhoeffer würde einmal als Professor in den Staaten einen Beitrag leisten, die amerikanische 'theistische Szenerie', wie sie damals war, ins Wanken zu bringen. So war er es, der 1939 alles nur mögliche tat, ihn im Land zu halten und zu retten. Er ging auf alle Zumutungen des guten Freundes geduldig ein, besorgte ihm Einladungen, um diese gleich wieder absagen zu müssen, wodurch er sich vor Kollegen und College-Präsidenten in ein durchaus schiefes Licht brachte; akzeptierte schließlich die Vergeblichkeit aller Mühen mit größter

Einführung. So ist er Instrument und Begleiter Bonhoeffers am wichtigsten Wendepunkt seines Lebens geworden." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 193.

<sup>217</sup> "Die Besprechungen moderner Schriftsteller leitete Reinhold Niebuhr. Wie amerikanische Studenten es lernen, mußte auch Bonhoeffer zu jedem Buch eine Beurteilung schreiben. Seine Niederschriften bieten eine interessante Auslese jener Jahre. Niebuhr ließ neben amerikanischer auch europäische Literatur beobachten, vornehmlich die neuere Weltkreisliteratur wie die damals erschienenen 'Kriegsbriefe gefallener Studenten', die Romane vom Remarque und Ludwig Renn und das Schauspiel des Engländers R.C. Sheriff 'Journey's End', welches Bonhoeffer gefiel; 'it does not belittle great idealistic feeling (dagegen war er empfindlich!), nor does it veil the naked reality'. Die literarische Wiedererweckung des Kriegserlebnisses sah er jedoch im großen und ganzen kritisch." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 199-200.

<sup>218</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 279.

<sup>219</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 201.

<sup>220</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 201. "Für seine Sitzungen hatte man Zeitungs- und Zeitschriftenartikel zu analysieren, um auf diese Weise ein sachgemäßes Urteil in weltpolitischen und innerpolitischen Fragen zu gewinnen. Einige Themen dieses Seminars sind sogar in Bonhoeffers Korrespondenz mit dem Elternhaus lebhaft zur Sprache gekommen." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 202.

<sup>221</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 202-03.

<sup>222</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 185.

<sup>223</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 279.

<sup>224</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 279.

<sup>225</sup> "Ich muß jetzt dauernd und bei den verschiedensten Gelegenheiten Reden und Ansprachen halten, übermorgen englisch predigen und in der nächsten Woche vor 1000 Schulkindern über Deutschland reden." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 206-07.

<sup>226</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 388' footnote 19.

<sup>227</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 381.

<sup>228</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 387-88. "Returning to the Christian point of view, it seems to me one of the greatest tasks for our church, to strengthen the work of peace in every country and in the whole world. It must never more happen, that a christian people fights against a christian people, brother against brother, since both have one Father. Our churches have already begun this international work. But more important than that is, it seems to me, that every christian man and woman, takes seriously the great idea of the unity of Christianity, above all personal and national desires, of the one christian people in the whole world, of the brotherhood of mankind, of the charity, about which Paul says: 1 Kor 13,4. Let us consider, that the last judgement comes for everyone, in America and Germany; and God will judge us according to our faith and love. How can the man, who hates his brother, expect grace by God." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 387-88.

<sup>229</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 388.

<sup>230</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 389.

<sup>231</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 389.

<sup>232</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 390.

<sup>233</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 577.

<sup>234</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 188. Bethge also notes: "Dies Erlebnis stärkte ihm für die Vorträge in den USA den Rücken, noch mehr beeinflusste es im folgenden Jahr seine bittere Reaktion auf die Erklärung von Hirsch und Althaus, welche 1931 deutsche Ökumeniker eines vaterlandslosen Internationalismus beschuldigten." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 188.

<sup>235</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 186.

<sup>236</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 185.

<sup>237</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 190.

<sup>238</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 190. In view of Lasserre's influence on Bonhoeffer Bethge observes: "Jean Lasserre's Eindruck auf ihn war tiefer, als er damals ahnte. Bonhoeffer meint ihn mit jener Briefstelle von einem 'Heiligen' in den Tegeler Gefängnisbriefen am Tage nach dem gescheiterten 20. Juli; und er ist es wohl auch, der den ersten Anstoß zu Bonhoeffers großem Buch von der 'Nachfolge' gegeben hat." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 190.

<sup>239</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 190.

<sup>240</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 83.

- <sup>241</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84.
- <sup>242</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84.
- <sup>243</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84.
- <sup>244</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 189.
- <sup>245</sup> "Bald auch zog er zu den ökumenischen Konferenzen, die er mitzuverantworten hatte, den zurückhaltenden Franzosen hinzu, damit dessen Stimme zur Geltung käme. Bei Bonhoeffer's Friedensrede in Fanö 1934 ist Lasserre zugegen gewesen. Schon in seinen Ansprachen in New York 1930/31 stellte Bonhoeffer den biblischen Grund zum Frieden und Ansätze zur Friedensbewegung in der deutschen Arbeiterschaft und Jugendbewegung in eine Weise heraus, wie wir das bei ihm vorher nie angetroffen haben. Es wird hier deutlich, daß Bonhoeffer die geringfügigen pazifistischen Strömungen in Deutschland gekannt hat. Aber jetzt erst, in der Begegnung mit Lasserre und in dieser ersten ökumenischen Konfrontation, verwandelt sich sein Schubfachwissen von lutherischer Ethik in eine engagierte Identifizierung mit Christi Friedenswort. Seine Begründung wird die biblisch-ökumenische vom einen Leib Christi. Sie baute er später immer stärker aus ..." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 191.
- <sup>246</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 468.
- <sup>247</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 277-78.
- <sup>248</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 277.
- <sup>249</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 288. Felix Gilbert is said to have also observed "a shift in Bonhoeffer's position from a nationalist view during his first year at Tübingen University to a pacifist stance after his return from America in 1931." Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 278.
- <sup>250</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 467.
- <sup>251</sup> According to Bethge they covered "2000 Eisenbahnkilometer durch Mexiko und 6000 im schmutzigen Oldsmobile ..." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 189.
- <sup>252</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 188.
- <sup>253</sup> They were invited by a sister of Maria and Käthe Horn, who was working at the German school in Havana. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 188.
- <sup>254</sup> Writing to superintendent Max Diestel from Havana-Vedado Bonhoeffer explains: "Ich werde Weihnachten hier mit einem Gottesdienst in der deutschen Kolonie feiern. Es ist nach den eisig kalten letzten Wochen in New York hier phantastisch warm, heute 28° Celsius im Schatten, die Gärten voller Blumen, die Bäume grün wie im Sommer. Die deutsche Schule, in der ich für die letzten Schultage den Religionsunterricht übernommen habe, macht einen ausgezeichneten Eindruck und die Kinder machen mir viel Freude." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 220.
- <sup>255</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 216f.
- <sup>256</sup> William Jay Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," *Harvard Theological Review* 1968, 449.
- <sup>257</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 205.
- <sup>258</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 205. Rößler reminded Bonhoeffer of the privilege that comes with such a sojourn in a foreign land: "Sie sehen jetzt Deutschland aus der Vogelschau der neuen Welt und werden manches anders beurteilen, wenn Sie zurückkommen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 237. In a similar vein Reinhold Seeberg encouraged Bonhoeffer to not underestimate the value of such an encounter: "Jedenfalls ist es doch für Ihr ganzes Leben ein wichtiges Ereignis, daß Sie diese westliche Welt einmal ohne all die Nebel, mit denen wir sie immer wieder umhüllen, gesehen haben, und andererseits, was für einen Deutschen auch wichtig ist, unmittelbar erleben, daß man auch leben kann, wenn man anders denkt und will als wir es tun." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 246-47.
- <sup>259</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 601. Von Hase argues as follows: "Was aber Bonhoeffer selbst seinen inzwischen gereiften Amerika-Erfahrungen verdankt, erfahren wir aus einem zweiten, dreißigseitigen Bericht, den er nach seinem Entschluß niederschrieb, trotz unmittelbar drohender Kriegsgefahr nach nur vierwöchigem Aufenthalt Ende Juli 1939 aus New York nach

Deutschland zurückkehren, obwohl das für ihn als Kriegsdienstverweigerer Lebensgefahr bedeutete. In den vier Wochen zwischen Ende Juli bis Ende August 1939, in denen jeder Deutsche sich insgeheim auf das Äußerste vorbereitete, wäre es kaum jemandem eingefallen, lange Reiseberichte zu verfassen, wäre ihm nicht dringend daran gelegen, eine sehr wichtige ökumenische Aufgabe aufgrund seiner Erfahrungen gewissermaßen testamentarisch zu dokumentieren." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 601.

<sup>260</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 280.

<sup>261</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 27.

<sup>262</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 280.

<sup>263</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 280.

<sup>264</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>265</sup> Bonhoeffer's second report is most probably directed to the "Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst" and does therefore not represent a continuation of the first report Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 281, footnote 2. He leaves out almost completely the life of the church and focuses on the second semester.

<sup>266</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 282.

<sup>267</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 282.

<sup>268</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>269</sup> While he confesses in his second report to have visited only a few German churches, he used every opportunity to familiarize himself with the different American denominations by visiting two services on a Sunday Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 282. These first-hand experiences are said to have been telling not only in respect to America's religious scene but also to America in general. For in these Sunday services, Bonhoeffer argues, "enthüllt sich Amerika, nicht so kraß, wenn auch nicht weniger deutlich." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 282.

<sup>270</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 431.

<sup>271</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>272</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>273</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>274</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>275</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>276</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>277</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>278</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 432.

<sup>279</sup> Bonhoeffer explains: "Er hat zur Kirche in Deutschland in der Reformation anders, d.h. dringlicher, vernehmlicher, öffentlicher gesprochen als zu irgendeiner späteren Zeit. Wie man die deutsche Kirche nicht ohne die Reformation verstehen kann, so bleibt das amerikanische Christentum dem verschlossen, der nicht etwa von den Anfängen der Kongregationalisten in Neuengland, der Baptisten in Rhode Island, von der Erweckungsbewegung durch Jonathan Edwards weiß. Amerikanisches Christentum ist eben auch und gerade das, was damals geschah und was dem heutigen amerikanischen Christentum ebenso unähnlich sieht, wie die Kirche der Jahrhundertwende bei uns der Reformationskirche ähnlich sah." Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 433.

<sup>280</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 433.

<sup>281</sup> Schöffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 28.

<sup>282</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 441.

<sup>283</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 440-41.

<sup>284</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 441.

<sup>285</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, 440-41.

<sup>286</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 195. In summing up Bonhoeffer's American encounters Bethge maintains: "Wenn Bonhoeffer auf dem theologischen Feld wenig Bereitschaft zeigte, auf Gegenargumente zu hören, so war er mit uneingeschränktem Interesse beteiligt, wo er sich neue Kenntnisse erhoffte und wo er überlegene Methoden und Urteilsfähigkeit entdeckte." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 198-99.

<sup>287</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 195.

<sup>288</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84.

<sup>289</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 84.

<sup>290</sup> De Lange, "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 85.

<sup>291</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 204.

<sup>292</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 601. Von Hase also remarks on the extent to which Bonhoeffer managed to challenge Union's theological outlook: "Und umgekehrt haben seine Freunde im Union gelernt, daß die "Theologie der Krise" eine echte Herausforderung auch für die amerikanische Theologie darstellte. Als ich im Herbst 1933 ans Union Seminary kam, sah die Weltlage schon bedrohlicher aus; die Weltwirtschaftskrise hatte in den USA 12 Millionen Arbeitslose in Not gestürzt, und in Deutschland war Hitler an die Macht gekommen. Der Fortschrittsglaube wankte, und man sprach wieder von Sünde. So fand ich ein lebhaftes Interesse für Karl Barth und seine Freunde vor. Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 601.

<sup>293</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 282.

<sup>294</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 204. How decisive this change of perspective must have been also becomes clear when we consider Rößler's comments to Bonhoeffer: "Sie sind ja Ihrem ganzen Wesen nach 'unpolitisch' veranlagt und haben, weil Sie nicht mitten in der Aktualität wirtschaftlichen Existenzkampfes und politischer Siedehitze stehen, es leichter von hoher Warte ... zu durchforschen. Das soll nicht bedeuten, daß ich Ihre Anfechtungen verkenne. Sie sind vielleicht umfassender, aber vielleicht nicht so konkretisiert wie bei uns 'Frontkämpfern in der Drecklinie'." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 238.

<sup>295</sup> Eberhard Amelung and Christoph Strohm observe in line with Niebuhr and Baillie: "Vor dem Aufbruch nach den USA im Sommer 1930 sind keinerlei Anzeichen einer besonderen Teilnahme an den politischen Entwicklungen in der Reichshauptstadt Berlin überliefert. ... Nach der Rückkehr aus den USA im Sommer 1931 sieht er sich im Rahmen seiner verschiedenen Tätigkeiten mit der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Krise am Ende der Weimarer Republik konfrontiert." Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 467.

<sup>296</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 204.

<sup>297</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 436.

<sup>298</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 436.

## 6. Dreaming India

### *Introduction*

Throughout his life Bonhoeffer cherished the dream of broadening his horizons towards the East and of learning from Eastern spirituality. His plans to visit India originated during his stay in Spain. It was an ambition conceived in youth and fueled by the work of Gandhi. And even though these plans never materialized, Keith Clements maintains that "it is noteworthy that he [Bonhoeffer] did dream the dream."<sup>1</sup> In fact, Bethge underlines the symbolic importance of those recurring travel plans to India for a reconstruction of Bonhoeffer's life: "In seinen jeweils neu profilierten Motiven gehört dieser Plan wesentlich zu Bonhoeffers Lebensbild, auch wenn er sich nie erfüllte."<sup>2</sup> It is along those lines that I want to argue that his desire to visit India constitutes an important backdrop to his early journeys and provides us with further insights on the connection Bonhoeffer draws between his turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" and his early "Fremderfahrungen". At the same time, in taking us beyond the time period of his early journeys, the longing for India reveals how the need for intercultural exchange remained an ongoing concern. Considering Bonhoeffer's changing motivations for traveling to India Bethge identifies three distinct phases:

Im Jahre 1928 hatte ihn der Wunsch nach größerer Welterfahrung auf den Indienplan gebracht. 1931 war die Skepsis an der westlichen Gestalt des Christentums hinzugekommen. 1934 trieb ihn das Verlangen, den Versuch mit der Bergpredigt in Gandhis Gestalt kennenzulernen: die zielgerichteten Exerzitien und die indische Widerstandsweise gegen eine als Tyrannei empfundene Obrigkeit.<sup>3</sup>

Our own examination will confirm Bethge's basic outline while also affirming that these phases can neither be kept distinct nor ascribed to a particular year. But each phase reveals another aspect of Bonhoeffer's longing for "Wirklichkeitsnähe" and will be examined in view of Schäffter's four *modi* of encountering "Fremdheit".



### *The Indian "Other"*

The first phase of Bonhoeffer's interest in India is characterized by youthful curiosity and humanist openness. His encounter with the Oriental "other" in Tripolis enhanced his eagerness to visit India and the East. In February 1928 Bonhoeffer's grandmother, Julie Bonhoeffer, writes to her grandson further inciting him to visit the East: "An Deiner Stelle würde ich doch suchen, mit der Zeit die entgegengesetzte Welt im Osten kennen zu lernen, ich denke nur an Indien, Buddha und seine Welt."<sup>4</sup> Such encouragement - accompanied by financial assistance<sup>5</sup> - was according to Bethge "ganz von Tafelscher Art" and illustrated the strong influence of the Tafel tradition on Bonhoeffer which exhibited a revolutionary element.<sup>6</sup> Even though at this stage his plans were still vague and of general nature reflecting the desire to widen his cultural horizon<sup>7</sup>, a fellow student of Tübingen recalls a night-time conversation with Bonhoeffer, in which already as early as in the winter 1924/25 Gandhi became an issue of debate.<sup>8</sup>

But how "revolutionary" were those plans at that time? Helmuth von Glasenapp's study *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker* observes an increasing German interest in India since the turn of the last century that was enabled by improved news communication and stronger economical ties.<sup>9</sup> Brenner highlights how this fascination with India was part of a wider "exotic" interest in the Far East nurtured by the hope "einer Erneuerung des Bewußtseins, der Denkformen und überhaupt der Geistes- wie der Lebenshaltung."<sup>10</sup> It forms part of what is commonly referred to as the "Exotismus-Syndrom" designating "den Drang zur märchenhaft-verklärten Ferne und die Abneigung, fast schon den Ekel gegenüber dem Nahen und Heimatlichen."<sup>11</sup> Socio-historically it hence represents another form of escapism, "eine Reaktion auf gesellschaftliche Entfremdungserscheinungen, die eine Ablehnung der umgebenden Realität evozieren."<sup>12</sup> Glasenapp lists the following socio-political factors that also explain the new curiosity in the East:

Die Verleihung des Nobelpreises an Rabîndranâth Tagore (1913) führte auch den den Kulturen des Ostens fernerstehenden Zeitgenossen vor Augen, daß die indische Dichtung der

Gegenwart auf den gleichen Rang Anspruch habe wie die abendländische. Der Erste Weltkrieg bewirkte selbst wieder eine Zunahme des Interesses am Morgenlande, weil die enge politische und wirtschaftliche Verflochtenheit der Länder des Orients und Okzidents durch ihn sichtbar wurde und das Bündnis Deutschlands mit der Türkei wie auch die freilich erst 30 Jahre später erfüllte Vorraussage der Befreiung Indiens den Blick jedes Zeitungslesers nach dem Osten wandte.<sup>13</sup>

Both the critique of an overemphasis on material goods and the thriving intellectual climate in the wake of Germany's defeat in World War I sparked off a greater openness among German poets and thinkers towards Eastern religious teachings.<sup>14</sup> There was an increasing awareness, "daß der aus den Kräften der Antike und des Mittelalters gespeisten mediterranen Gesittung in Indien und anderen Bereichen Asiens eigenständige und gleichwertige Ausdrucksformen kulturellen Schaffens zur Seite stehen ..."<sup>15</sup> Glasenapp's overview confirms one of Said's designations of Orientalism as being "pitched at a rigorously transindividual, cultural level and suggests 'an enormously systematic' mechanism capable of organizing and largely determining whatever may be said or written about the Orient."<sup>16</sup> But Glasenapp's analysis also shows that the kind of Orientalism characteristic of Germany's views of India is by far more heterogenous. Peter Brenner in fact notes how German travel writings at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reflected both eurocentric and eurocritical perspectives.<sup>17</sup> The response of the majority of Christians and of many theologians to the growing interest in the East conveyed, for example, strong reservations towards its "pagan" religions and indicated a one-sided understanding of its "Fremdheit als Gegenbild".<sup>18</sup> It reflected what Brenner describes as the "Kontrast-Prinzip" whereby the Oriental "other" represents "das Gegenbild zur okzidentalen Kultur, die vor diesem Hintergrund sich selbst als auch durch 'Ordnung, Rationalität, Eindeutigkeit und Geschlossenheit' ausgezeichnet begriff."<sup>19</sup> Summing up the different theological standpoints Glasenapp observes a whole spectrum of approaches ranging "Zwischen der hochmütigen Uninteressiertheit und der fanatischen Ablehnung, zwischen der bedingten Anerkennung und der Zubilligung der Gleichberechtigung."<sup>20</sup> But interestingly, especially for the 1920s in Germany, Staats recognizes also a deep-seated "Indiensehnsucht" in the more ecumenical circles. It is mirrored in the enthusiastic reception of the Indian-Christian traveling monk "Sadhu" Sundar Singh in Germany 1922

and in the discussions that followed among well-known ecumenicals such as Friedrich Heiler and Nathan Söderblom.<sup>21</sup> In some ways, then, Bonhoeffer's initial interest in India is representative of this openness to engage the Oriental "other" reflecting an understanding of its "Fremdheit als Ergänzung" and nurtured by "Informationsbedarf, Abwechslungsbedürfnis, Neugierde und Wissenstransfer ..."<sup>22</sup>

His first trip to America marked the beginning of the fulfillment of his plans. The idea was to return to Germany by way of India. Those plans concretized when his prosperous American travel companion on the "Columbus", Dr Lucas, who happened to be the president of a college in Lahore, not only gave him good advice, but extended an invitation to his house in Lahore for the next summer.<sup>23</sup> He promised to take him to the hills, to Benares, Allahabad, Agra and Delhi. Bonhoeffer was planning this trip with determined enthusiasm and preparations were well on their way.<sup>24</sup> Only when the route via the Pacific proved to be much more expensive than the one along the Near East did his initial enthusiasm quiet down. During his stay at Union Theological Seminary the topic of India persisted in his thoughts.<sup>25</sup> Attending the seminar "Ethical Interpretations of Current Events" by Harry F. Ward, Professor of Christian Ethics, Bonhoeffer had to write a small report on the situation in India.<sup>26</sup> It was the time of the London Round-Table Conferences (1930-1932) where the confrontation between Gandhi and Lord Halifax took place. But it is most interesting that two of his teachers at Union, Niebuhr and Baillie, interpret his resurging plan to visit India as a clear indication of Bonhoeffer's change of perception on the Christian relevance of ethical and political issues, an outflow of his "American" experience: "Shortly after his return to Germany he became very much interested in ethical and political issues and for a time considered going to India to study Gandhi's movement."<sup>27</sup>

But Bonhoeffer's interest in India went beyond a potential exchange of ethical and political arguments. It was increasingly driven by a growing skepticism towards the whole of Western culture. Writing to his friend Helmut Rössler he complains about "jene fratzenhaft europäisierte Welt" which he also encountered in America.<sup>28</sup> He is concerned about how "local" Germany's situation and theology appears from across the Atlantic and

how difficult it is for them to recognize “daß in der ganzen Welt gerade Deutschland und dort gerade wieder ein paar Männer begriffen haben sollen, was Evangelium ist.”<sup>29</sup> His worries about the inner hollowness of American mission and the dying “motherchurch” were deepened by his conviction, “daß unser heutiges Verständnis des Evangeliums drüben einfach nicht gehört werden kann.”<sup>30</sup> This strong sense of battling to be heard and to communicate the Gospel points him toward India as the place where a solution to the crisis might be found: “Ein großes Land möchte ich noch sehen, ob vielleicht von dort die große Lösung kommt – Indien; denn sonst scheint es aus zu sein, scheint das große Sterben des Christentums da zu sein.”<sup>31</sup> Bonhoeffer radically questions the West’s ability and integrity in interpreting the Gospel and imagines a transaction of ownership by which the Gospel would be expressed through very different words and deeds: “Ob unsere Zeit vorüber ist und das Evangelium einem anderen Volk gegeben ist, vielleicht gepredigt mit *ganz* anderen Worten und Taten?”<sup>32</sup> It is a curiosity and openness heightened by his struggle to communicate theological truths and by his great frustrations about being continuously confronted with God’s invisibility.<sup>33</sup> He writes to Rössler: “Wenn wir’s nicht in unserem persönlichen Leben sehen können, daß Christus da war, dann wollen wir’s wenigstens in Indien sehen, aber dies wahnwitzige, dauernd Zurückgeworfenwerden auf den unsichtbaren Gott selbst – das kann doch kein Mensch mehr aushalten.”<sup>34</sup> Peck therefore rightly argues: “If America meant departing from Christian Europe, India meant leaving the West altogether.”<sup>35</sup>

It hence becomes clear how Bonhoeffer’s desire to go to India was from early on closely linked with the critique of the religious *Gestalt* of the West and expressed an important theological aspect of his longing for “Wirklichkeitsnähe”. Bonhoeffer’s question about whether “unsere Zeit vorüber ist und das Evangelium einem anderen Volk gegeben ist, vielleicht gepredigt mit *ganz* anderen Worten und Taten”<sup>36</sup> is taken up again in his first letter from prison on religionless Christianity where he reckons with “einer völlig religionslosen Zeit ...”<sup>37</sup> There he ponders the possibility of perceiving “die westliche Gestalt des Christentums nur als Vorstufe einer völligen Religionslosigkeit ...”<sup>38</sup> Feil argues that Bonhoeffer’s mentioning of Christianity’s “westliche Gestalt” implies “die Alternative einer – faktischen oder vielleicht auch nur potentiellen – ‘östlichen Gestalt’

des Christentums.”<sup>39</sup> Writing to his brother Karl-Friedrich during his stay in England similar thoughts are expressed introducing the important combination of “Gestalt” and “Interpretation” when describing the decline of Christianity in the West: “Und da ich täglich mehr der Überzeugung werde, daß es im Westen mit dem Christentum sein Ende nimmt – jedenfalls in seiner bisherigen Gestalt und seiner bisherigen Interpretation – möchte ich, bevor ich nach Deutschland zurückgehe, gern noch mal in den Osten.”<sup>40</sup> It hence becomes clear according to Feil “daß Bonhoeffer immer Worte und Taten bzw. Taten und Worte, Gestalt und Interpretation nebeneinander nennt und dabei dem Gestaltproblem meist die erste Stelle einräumt.”<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, when looking at Bonhoeffer’s use of “Interpretation” Feil reminds us of the contrast between reality and interpretation - analogous to his distinction between *actus directus* and *actus reflexus* – characteristic of *Widerstand und Ergebung*.<sup>42</sup> This contrast was anticipated especially in Bonhoeffer’s American lectures and his introduction to Barth’s theology at which he stresses “die große Antithese von Gotteswort und Menschenwort, von Gnade und Religion, von einer rein christlichen und einer allgemein religiösen Kategorie, von Wirklichkeit und Interpretation ...”<sup>43</sup> Feil hereby notes how according to Bonhoeffer interpretation always “hinter der Wirklichkeit zurück[bleibt] wie Worte hinter Taten.”<sup>44</sup> Bonhoeffer’s critique of the Western “Gestalt” exhibits a basic suspicion of representation which is theologically rooted in the strict distinction between the Word and the words. But this is not the only significant contrast Bonhoeffer’s argument evolves around. Suggesting “die westliche Gestalt des Christentums nur als Vorstufe einer völligen Religionslosigkeit” as already mentioned above, he then continues by asking: “Wenn die Religion nur ein Gewand des Christentums ist – und auch dieses Gewand hat zu verschiedenen Zeiten sehr verschieden ausgesehen – was ist dann ein religionsloses Christentum?”<sup>45</sup> Bonhoeffer’s understanding of religion as Christianity’s “Gewand” is pertinent. The same thought reoccurs when he laments in a letter to Bethge: “Nur sind mir die religiösen Einkleidungen so unbehaglich.”<sup>46</sup> Interestingly both expressions, “Gewand” and “Einkleidung”, resonate with Adolf von Harnack’s distinction between “Schale und Kern” and “Form und Inhalt” which he employs in order to ascertain “das Wesentliche” of Christianity.<sup>47</sup>

Bonhoeffer's thinking assumes a similar distinction, but it is driven by the quest to see the reality of God. Deeply aware of his own cultural limitations and the dilemma of the invisible God, Bonhoeffer hopes to discover the reality of God through the encounter with another culture. The way he envisions encountering Christ in a different "Gestalt" or "interpretation" conveys the desire for a genuine "Grenzerfahrung", which discloses the problematic of representation, especially when it comes to the reality of God. It is hence through the encounter with the cultural "other" that Bonhoeffer hopes to encounter the reality of the divine "other". The great difficulty with God's invisibility already characterizes, according to Feil, the argument in *Sanctorum Communio*. Bonhoeffer's remarks mirror his life-long struggle to not confuse reality with an idea, especially in view of experiencing the real God.<sup>48</sup> It explains the strong polemic against idealism and its inherent abstraction. The urgency of "seeing" that Christ was here, in contrast, corresponds with the decisive question raised in *Ethik und Widerstand und Ergebung*, "wie Christus unter uns heute und hier Gestalt gewinne ..."<sup>49</sup> In fact, the leading question with which he begins his reflections in prison is, as Feil points out, "was das Christentum oder auch wer Christus heute für uns eigentlich ist ...?"<sup>50</sup>

Bonhoeffer's particular attraction to India continued to take on different meanings during a third phase. As his initial curiosity met with a growing scepticism towards the West and his expectations for a new "Gestalt" of Christianity, his interest in India focused on the country as the birthplace of a very different culture as well as the home of Gandhi and his method of non-violent resistance. His February 1932 lecture on "Das Recht auf Selbstbehauptung" reveals the profound wisdom Bonhoeffer senses in India's culture and the seriousness with which he attempts to engage in a comparative study.<sup>51</sup> It resonates with German travel literature around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which pictures the journey to the East as "Reise in den Urzustand" exhibiting a turning to the "primitive" and a regressive escapism – "welche auch als Flucht vor den Phänomenen der modernen Kriegsführung zu verstehen ist, wie sie erstmals seit 1914 erfahren wurde ..."<sup>52</sup> Deeply aware of the political and economic crisis of the Weimar Republic – especially the high unemployment and the very limited job market – Bonhoeffer's central question is: "welches Recht hast du, dich im Kampf ums Dasein zu behaupten, in vollem Bewußtsein,

daß du fremdes Leben damit ruinierst, zerstörst, der Sinnlosigkeit anheimgibst?"<sup>53</sup> This key question, coined as the "Daseinsfrage", is perceived to be fundamental not only to individuals but to pervade at every level society's various forms of "Gemeinschaftsleben"<sup>54</sup>: "Es ist ein seltenes Bild der Geschichte zu sehen, daß ausnahmslos alle bisherigen Ordnungen hineingerissen werden, daß sie vor die Alternative gestellt sind, ihr Recht zu begründen oder aber preiszugeben."<sup>55</sup> But even at the highest level of international relations, the absolutizing of a nation's self-assertion and expansion, encoded in the biological, socio-Darwinist ideology is being questioned.<sup>56</sup> And so Bonhoeffer argues for a genuine boundary that respects difference and otherness: "Hast du ein Recht, die blühende Kultur des nachbarlichen Landes zu vernichten um deinetwillen?"<sup>57</sup> The issue became especially pertinent in the light of national minded theologians legitimating the displacement of an older Volk by a younger one as "geschichtliche Schöpfungsordnung".<sup>58</sup>

Bonhoeffer conceives basically two answers humanity has provided in response to this "Urfrage". The one originates in the East, the other in the West. A careful reading of Bonhoeffer's typifications illustrates what Peck commented on as "Bonhoeffer's naiveté about the real India"<sup>59</sup>, turning India from a geographical region into a projection of his own desire for harmony and wholeness.<sup>60</sup> Bonhoeffer's comparison once again illustrates an understanding of India's "Fremdheit als Gegenbild", this time echoing traditional sentimental imaginings of the Orient as "sublime ideal, a lost otherness, a time and space removed from the occidental world ..."<sup>61</sup> India's respect for and more passive approach to life is perceived to symbolize Eastern resignation. This is contrasted with the rather aggressive and self-destructive solutions offered by European-American civilisation, symbolized in the machine and war.<sup>62</sup> But Bonhoeffer defies simple labels such as the one being "die schlechthin animalische, instinkthafte Lösung" and the other being "die eigentlich menschliche ..."<sup>63</sup> For in both cases the human being is perceived in his privileged position as being able to overcome nature. The major difference, of course, is the way this privilege is translated into a culture's relation to nature: "In der Welt des Ostens geschieht das dadurch, daß der Mensch zu leiden vermag um der Seele willen, im Abendland vermag der Mensch die Natur zu beherrschen, bekämpfen, in seinen Dienst zu

zwingen; und diese Herrscherstellung des Menschen über die Natur ist das Grundthema der europäisch-amerikanischen Geschichte."<sup>64</sup> Even though Bonhoeffer concedes, "Auch der indische Mensch ist tiefer und stärker als die Natur, weil er sie versteht und wissend für sie und von ihr leidet", he still sides with the Western idea which maintains, "der Mensch ist tiefer und stärker als die Natur, weil er ihr Feind und Bedränger ist."<sup>65</sup> It is regarded as an innate privilege with far-reaching consequences:

Darum kann der Europäer auch die Natur nicht lieben, ohne in ihr die dämonischen Gewalten zu vernehmen, die ihn bedrohen und in der tiefen Freude, die ihm die Angst vor der Natur und der Kampf gegen sie gibt, liebt er sie. Sein Weg zur Natur ist ein gebrochener. Sie versagte ihm alles, darum muß er es ihr gegen ihren Willen abringen, und um dieses Kampfes willen liebt er sie. Der indische Mensch empfängt von der Natur alles und liebt sie darum, sein Leben ist kein Kampf gegen sie, sondern ein Empfangen von ihr.<sup>66</sup>

Bonhoeffer's careful analysis still falls prey to the rhetoric of "the white man's burden", in this particular case the European man's burden.<sup>67</sup> He constructs what Spurr describes as "a dynamic of progression which sees history as a great struggle between the opposing forces of nature and culture ..."<sup>68</sup> It represents a colonial rhetoric of naturalization that polarizes nature versus civilization and is known to have carried with it "an implied justification for the European colonizing mission ..."<sup>69</sup> For this ideology "has its foundation in a moral philosophy which calls for the conquest of nature ..."<sup>70</sup> It becomes clear how in such a discourse the concept of nature "stands for an empty space in the discourse, ready to be charged with any one of a number of values: nature as abundance, as absence, as original innocence, as unbridled destruction, as eternal cycle, as constant progression ..."<sup>71</sup>

But the East and West are seen to relate differently not only to nature, but also to history and to the other human being. And it is within that context that a European-American notion of responsibility, and its ultimate fulfillment in the freedom to self-sacrifice, is sketched as the appropriate solution to the "Daseinsfrage", appropriating India's ideal as a strong argument for a Western understanding of self-sacrifice: "Das ist die Vollendung des Gedankens vom Leben als Verantwortung, als Gebundensein an Geschichte und



Gemeinschaft, daß dies Leben nur Recht hat durchs Opfer.”<sup>72</sup> This life of responsibility which qualifies the right of self-assertion as basically being the “Freiheit zum Opfer”<sup>73</sup> is again seen to apply not only to individuals but also to every “Gemeinschaft”, including nations, since “auch die große Gemeinschaft des Volkes lebt nicht für sich selbst, sondern für den andern, lebt in der Verantwortung für den Bruder, für das Brudervolk.”<sup>74</sup>

It is in this context, as Bethge has pointed out, that Bonhoeffer ventures to articulate “pazifistische Akzente”<sup>75</sup>. Referring to “Krieg” and “Maschine” as expressions of the Western solution Bonhoeffer suggests that “nicht nur ihrer Idee nach, die Natur dem Menschen zu unterwerfen und ihn so leben zu lassen, sondern auch ihrer Wirklichkeit nach hat die Maschine den Krieg unmöglich gemacht.”<sup>76</sup> The alternative Bonhoeffer proposes is a “Western”, “universal” understanding of the term humanity, re-imaging its unity in the light of the notion of sacrifice: “Auch die Völker können und sollen sich opfern. Und so weitet sich wiederum der Blick und umspannt die ganze Erde, die Menschheit.”<sup>77</sup> Extending this re-definition of self-assertion as the right to serve others onto the whole of humanity, the concept of sacrifice is suggested as the fundamental life principle.<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer ends his talk by identifying the horizon of Christianity as the decisive background of the radical Western ideal of such self-surrender and sacrifice:

Und hier nun taucht im Hintergrund dieses westlichen Gedankenbildes der Horizont des Christentums auf und in ihm die Gestalt des Jesus von Nazareth, des Menschensohnes, der der Gottessohn, der Christus genannt wird. Er vollbringt das Opfer der Menschheit, aus dem allein die Menschheit leben kann, und nun lebt seit der Tat von Golgatha die Menschheit ganz aus jener Tat.<sup>79</sup>

It hence becomes clear that Bonhoeffer’s radical critique of Western civilization “refused to acknowledge qualitative differences within the one European culture ...”<sup>80</sup> At this point in time its unity was seen “in its urge toward self-destruction.”<sup>81</sup> The classical humanist values with which he had been raised seemed to have lost their power and influence. The factors comprising Europe were, as de Lange points out, “conflict, not unity; mechanization, not the building of the personality; anonymity, not individuality

...<sup>82</sup> The renewal of the West was seen to emerge from a deep respect for life and a readiness to suffer as exemplified in India. Bonhoeffer was especially impressed by how Ghandi reshaped this approach to life into a political strategy introducing it at a national level: "Es ist die gewaltige Tat Gandhis, diese Lebenslehre, die sich an den Einzelnen richtet, nun auf ein Volk in einer nationalen Frage auszudehnen und nun auch die Gemeinschaft unter das Gebot zu stellen: Du sollst kein Leben vernichten, leiden ist besser denn mit Gewalt leben."<sup>83</sup> One wonders to what extent his particular fascination with Gandhi's contribution influenced his own reasoning for applying the notion of sacrifice to the level of international relations. But even though he begins his lecture with positively engaging India's understanding of self-surrender, in the end it is the West and Christianity which are perceived to encourage the kind of responsibility which points to self-sacrifice. De Lange interprets this move "as Bonhoeffer's final attempt to draw from the connection between European culture and Christianity a system of ethics applicable to the situation."<sup>84</sup> But having said that, in the end Bonhoeffer's argument remains strictly self-referential in terms of working within his own defined cultural and spiritual values. It again strikes us that India clearly represents the place where the kind of Christian self-surrender he attempts to recover for the West is perceived to be present and visible and in this sense "real". Gandhi's practice of non-violent resistance inspired his critique of the European and American form of Christianity and continued to be, as Feil highlights, an important point of reference for Bonhoeffer's thoughts on religionless Christianity.<sup>85</sup>

Bonhoeffer's reflections resonate with Schöffter's understanding of "Fremdheit als Resonanzboden des Eigenen" and are deeply rooted in the European tradition of the interpretation of the foreign as "Entdeckung und Wiedergewinnung des eigenen Ursprung ..."<sup>86</sup> India in particular became a European symbol "einer verlorenen und menschlichen Ganzheitlichkeit, nach der die Europäer sehnsuchtsvoll verlangten ..."<sup>87</sup> To Bonhoeffer Christianity's origin in the East certainly represents a major motive for his desire to engage India. For Christianity's decline is perceived to be due to the process of having been "verwestlicht und mit rein zivilisatorischen Erwägungen durchsetzt ..." Bonhoeffer's argument about Christianity's Oriental origin in contrast to its Westernized version needs also to be read in the light of his later comments on the hot countries as the

original birthplaces of culture. Trying to comfort Bethge who suffered of tropical heat during his military mission in Italy, Bonhoeffer reflects in his prison cell about his own experiences of the sun. The heat of the sun is perceived to have the power to affirm one's bodily existence and to set one free from the inauthenticity of a purely spiritual existence.<sup>88</sup> And he continues to highlight how the hot countries from the Mediterranean Sea to India and Central America display a particular creativity, which the colder countries thrive on.<sup>89</sup> The theme of the "hot countries" thereby signals a fascinating connection between India and his understanding of a non-religious Christianity. Their creative affirmation of existence links in with Bonhoeffer's "non-religious" interpretation of Christianity and its aspect of establishing "eine konstruktive Weltbezogenheit des christlichen Glaubens."<sup>90</sup>

In the light of Schäffter's second *modus* of "Fremdheit als Gegenbild" India takes on an almost utopian character "als Negation einer reduzierten und einseitig verfestigten Eigenheit."<sup>91</sup> "Geboren werden hier," Schäffter maintains, "vielfältige Mythen der Zivilisationskritik und Natürlichkeitssehnsucht mit ihren Idealisierungen von dem, was das Eigene gerade nicht bieten kann."<sup>92</sup> He refers in this respect to the African ethnologist Duala-M'bedy, who argues,

daß die europäische Kultur gerade "aus Unbehagen an sich selbst" den "Mythos des Fremden als eines Kunststückes" benötigt, "um sich selbst wieder in den Griff zu bekommen." Die Wahrnehmung des Fremden als Gegenbild des Eigenen ermöglicht eine Ausbalancierung und produziert in spiegelbildlicher Verkehrung abermals ein vereinseitigtes und reduziertes Bild des Anderen, um eine "eindeutige Alternative zur eigenen Erfahrung" zu gewinnen und dies schließlich als "Kulturregulativ" instrumentalisieren zu können.<sup>93</sup>

The problem of such instrumentalisation is that "Fremdheit in dieser Deutung zum 'Stigma einer polarisierten Welt'[wird], in der das Fremde anderer Kulturen vor allem deshalb begehrenswert wird, weil das Eigene nur noch von einem kulturpessimistischen Standpunkt aus erlebt werden kann."<sup>94</sup> And yet, Peck is right to point out that in Bonhoeffer's case "in spite of its role in calling the West into question, [it was] in no sense a flight from the West."<sup>95</sup> India is described as "a fertilizing theme", "a streak of

light in the whole structure of his theological vision.”<sup>96</sup> Peck, hence, argues that the theme of India “needs to be held together with such intense loyalty to a deeply traditional Christian outlook as we find in *The Cost of Discipleship* if it is to carry no more and no less than its proper import for our understanding of the whole vision.”<sup>97</sup> In this regard Peck follows Bethge’s biography where India is seen to be balanced with the theme of discipleship. Looking in particular at Bonhoeffer’s stay in London 1933 to 1935 Bethge highlights how Bonhoeffer’s longing for India was coupled with an intense grappling with the sermon of the mount and the demands of discipleship.<sup>98</sup>

Several months later, writing to Erwin Sutz, Bonhoeffer once again confesses: “Vor einem Jahr mit Lasserre in Mexico! Ich kann das kaum denken, ohne daß es mich wie irrsinnig wieder herauszieht diesmal nach dem Osten. Ich weiß noch nicht wann. Aber sehr lange darf es nicht mehr dauern.”<sup>99</sup> Hence it is once again the encounter with the East which offers the key to the impasse when Bonhoeffer maintains: “Es muß noch andere Menschen auf der Erde geben, solche die mehr wissen und können als wir. Und es ist einfach banausenhaft, dann nicht auch dorthin lernen zu gehen.”<sup>100</sup> Bonhoeffer attends the meeting of the executive committee of the World Alliances in August 1932, where he meets C.F. Andrews, an English Quaker and Gandhi’s friend.<sup>101</sup> A few days later Bonhoeffer participates in the joint youth conference of the World Alliance and the Ecumenical Council. In the round-table discussion he lead, the situation in Indian is debated at great length.<sup>102</sup> With the political turning point that came on 30 January 1933 the day-to-day struggle intensified and Bonhoeffer’s existence began to acquire a public dimension.<sup>103</sup> Against the backdrop of growing alienation from his church and determined separation from those colleagues who had compromised with the Nazi Aryan clause, his personal initiative to visit India re-awakenes with the focus on learning more about non-violent resistance: “Der alte Indienplan erwachte zu neuem Leben. Ethik und Praxis des gewaltlosen Widerstandes wollte er besser kennenlernen.”<sup>104</sup> But his interest in Gandhi’s ethics and practice of passive resistance was not shared, even by some of his closer friends: “Die geheime Sehnsucht nach Indien und das Interesse an den Kampfmethoden Gandhis verstand selbst der einsichtige Pfarrerkreis in der Berliner

Achenbachstraße nicht. Mit seinen Neigungen zum Pazifismus stand er allein.”<sup>105</sup> In another letter to his friend Erwin Sutz in 1934 Bonhoeffer envisions a very different opposition to the National Socialist claim to power which explains his growing desire to study passive resistance under Gandhi:

Und obwohl ich mit vollen Kräften in der kirchlichen Opposition mitarbeite, ist es mir doch ganz klar, daß diese Opposition nur ein ganz vorläufiges Durchgangsstadium zu einer ganz anderen Opposition ist, und daß die Männer dieses ersten Vorgeplänkels zum geringsten Teil die Männer jenes zweiten Kampfes sind. Und ich glaube, die ganze Christenheit muß mit uns darum beten, daß das “Widerstehen bis aufs Blut” [Hebrews 12,4] kommt und daß Menschen gefunden werden, die es erleiden. Einfach erleiden – darum wird es dann gehen, nicht Fechten, Hauen, Stechen – das mag für das Vorgefecht noch erlaubt und möglich sein, der eigentliche Kampf, zum dem es vielleicht später kommt, muß einfach ein glaubendes Erleiden sein und dann, dann vielleicht wird sich Gott wieder zu seiner Kirche mit seinem Wort bekennen, aber bis dahin muß viel geglaubt, viel gebetet und viel gelitten werden.<sup>106</sup>

It was Bonhoeffer’s attempt to initiate a form of struggle that would be in keeping with Christian ethics which, according to Bethge, distinguished him from others.<sup>107</sup> During a stay in England Bonhoeffer came very close to finalizing his travel plans. But colleagues and friends questioned his rationale at a time when the church struggle demanded the unreserved commitment he preached about. Bethge points out how they failed to comprehend Bonhoeffer’s motives: “Sie wurden nicht gewahr, daß hinter Bonhoeffers geistlicher Leidenschaft noch eine Mischung von Wißbegier und Skeptizismus wohnte.”<sup>108</sup> Writing to his grandmother about his travel plans Bonhoeffer reveals strong scepticism towards his own church and a growing desire to stay with Gandhi. It sometimes appear to him “als ob in dem dortigen ‘Heidentum’ vielleicht mehr christliches steckt als in unserer ganzen Reichskirche.”<sup>109</sup> He ponders Christianity’s Oriental origin and self-critically maintains: “wir haben es dermaßen verwestlicht und mit rein zivilisatorischen Erwägungen durchsetzt, daß es uns so weit verloren gegangen ist, wie wir jetzt erleben.”<sup>110</sup> Disillusioned also about the church opposition, his preference would be “gleich zu Gandhi gehen, an den ich sehr gute Empfehlungen von

seinen besten Freunden bereits habe. Vielleicht kann ich auch dort mal ein halbes Jahr oder länger als Gast hin.”<sup>111</sup>

Bonhoeffer's travel preparations began to solidify. Theodor Lang, First Secretary at the German Embassy who had spent time in the East, familiarized him with living conditions there. Bonhoeffer even tried on Lang's tropical suits, which Mrs. Lang then altered to fit him, and underwent tests at the Wellcome Institute to test his fitness for the tropics.<sup>112</sup> He found strong support from Herbert Jehle, at this time a physicist and mathematician at Cambridge, who most of all shared his pacifist ideas. But he also managed to deepen his Far Eastern connections. Bethge also mentions the importance of his acquaintance with Charles Andrews who recommends various contact persons especially in view of their great interest in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>113</sup> Mira Bai's return to England in the summer of 1934 added an important momentum.<sup>114</sup> Reading her accounts and hearing her speak provided helpful contact with one of Gandhi's close followers. He acquainted himself with the writings of Jack Winslow, an expert on Asiatic exercises, and dialogued with English pacifists who were in sympathy with Gandhi. Beverley Nichol's book *Cry Havoc* was given to him.<sup>115</sup> How strongly Gandhi's way of life had already impacted on Bonhoeffer's thoughts is again illustrated by his sermon on peace at Fanö. Making a strong appeal to the ecumenical council to radically side with Christ's call for peace, Bonhoeffer declares: "Müssen wir uns von den Heiden im Osten beschämen lassen? Sollten wir die einzelnen, die ihr Leben an diese Botschaft wagen, allein lassen?"<sup>116</sup> It is the kind of urgency reflected in this speech that continued to propel him toward India during his stay in London. In this respect his interest in the Sermon on the Mount and his desire to meet Gandhi did not represent two separate threads but one strand. For it was Gandhi's shaping and interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount which interested Bonhoeffer. Gandhi's approach entailed two important aspects: "die zielgerichteten Exerzitionen und die indische Widerstandsweise gegen eine als Tyrannei empfundene Obrigkeit."<sup>117</sup> Back home in Berlin his travel plans were regarded as "verrückte Kuriosität".<sup>118</sup> Even in a letter from Karl Barth the issue is cited as having caused some confusion and disbelief.<sup>119</sup> In the meantime the Confessional Synod renewed their pressure on Bonhoeffer to head up the Confessing Church's training college for the

ministry. Due to his proposed journey to India he continually postponed his return to Germany and convinced the Synod to wait until the spring of 1935. It is through the help of Bishop Bell that Bonhoeffer finally contrived an invitation from Gandhi.<sup>120</sup> Soon after in response to a letter Bonhoeffer must have written - Gandhi issued the following invitation to him and one of his friends:<sup>121</sup>

I have your letter. If you and your friend have enough money for return passage and can pay your expenses here, say, at the rate of Rs. 100 per month each, you can come whenever you like. The sooner the better so as to get the benefit of such cold weather as we get here. The Rs. 100 per month I have calculated as the outside limit for those who can live simply. It may cost you even half the amount. It all depends upon how the climate here agrees with you.

With reference to your desire to share my daily life, I may say that you will be staying with me if I am out of prison and settled in one place when you come. But otherwise, if I am travelling or if I am in prison, you will have to be satisfied with remaining in or near of the institutions that are being conducted under my supervision. If you can stay in any of the institutions I have in mind and if you can live on the simple vegetarian food that these institutions can supply you, you will have nothing to pay for your boarding and lodging.<sup>122</sup>

But the events preceding the secession of the London congregations from the Reich Church and the quarrel with the Church External Affairs Office demanded Bonhoeffer's full attention and solidarity with his colleagues and his congregations. And soon after the inauguration of the Finkenwalde Training College for the Ministry the situation necessitated a speedy return making it necessary to abandon the journey. It was the dreaded either-or decision Bonhoeffer had to make<sup>123</sup>: "Lange Zeit hatte Bonhoeffer versucht, Indien und das Seminar nicht zur Alternative werden zu lassen, sondern das eine zu tun, um das andere umso besser verwirklichen zu können. Nun war es doch ein Entweder-Oder geworden."<sup>124</sup> But he profited from his visits to various Anglican seminaries and monasteries that provided him with new insights with regard to training for the ministry and community life.<sup>125</sup> It was his intention to encounter other traditions as a preparation for his own experiment of starting a *vita communis*.<sup>126</sup> Bethge highlights how the project "Finkenwalde" became a "Kristallisationspunkt der Gedanken, die Bonhoeffer in den letzten Jahren beschäftigt hatten: eine Theologie der Bergpredigt, eine

Gemeinschaft in Exerzitium und Dienst, ein Zeugnis gewaltlosen Widerstandes und ökumenischer Offenheit.”<sup>127</sup> The influence India continued to have on all of these themes is well captured when Bethge concludes: “Er reiste statt nach Indien nach Pommern, um seinen eigenen ‘Ashram’, das Seminar, ohne fernöstliche Erfahrungen aufzubauen.”<sup>128</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Each phase provides us with what Bethge describes as an important “Kontrapunkt” to Bonhoeffer’s own philosophy and theology and illustrates new aspects of his desire for “Wirklichkeitsnähe”.<sup>129</sup> The stark contrast sketched between faith and religion, characteristic of his early theological writings, is accompanied by the desire of a first-hand experience of another culture and religion. His initial argument in favour of a nation’s self-assertion in line with dominant Lutheran teaching of his time is challenged by Gandhi’s non-violent resistance. And his strong emphasis on active involvement and rational analysis is balanced by his interest in “passio, der Versenkung und der synthetischen Intuition.”<sup>130</sup> Finally the alarming question of why Christianity originated in the East corresponded with his growing suspicion of Western interpretations of Christianity. My analysis looked at each of those counter-points and tried to make them transparent to their respective construction of “Fremdheit” as “Gegenbild”, as “Ergänzung” or as “Resonanzboden des Eigenen”. In contrast to his direct encounter with the Orient in North Africa, India remained a place of imagination nurtured by what Said coined the Orientalist “visions” and “textualizations”. For while each counter-point expressed a different aspect of his desire for more “Wirklichkeitsnähe” – the heart of it being the longing for God’s visible reality – Bonhoeffer primarily employs India’s otherness for a self-critical and self-referential look at the West’s cultural and religious *Gestalt*. For on the one hand Bonhoeffer is prone to essentialize the Oriental “other” and to dichotomize the East and West into “we-they contrasts”<sup>131</sup> On the other hand India is given the “exoticist” role of origin and alter ego. And in this sense Bonhoeffer’s reflections produce “information about an invented ‘other’, which locates and justifies the power of the knowledgeable European self.”<sup>132</sup>



And yet, my analysis also questions whether one can “ultimately escape procedures of dichotomizing, restructuring, and textualizing in the making of interpretive statements about foreign cultures and traditions ...”<sup>133</sup> At the same time our examination has also shown that one cannot, as Lowe points out, “construct a master narrative or a singular history of orientalism.”<sup>134</sup> Instead one should rather argue for “a conception of orientalism as heterogeneous and contradictory” in the sense “that each of these orientalisms is internally complex and unstable.”<sup>135</sup> Bonhoeffer’s rejection of cultural imperialism in his lecture “Das Recht auf Selbstbehauptung”, for example, clearly interrupts the narrative of Orientalism and illustrates an important moment of resistance to Western hegemony. And his desire for “Wirklichkeitsnähe” in terms of discovering a Gospel “gepredigt mit ganz anderen Worten und Taten” displays an Orientalism that is prepared to be questioned and subverted. Ironically, it is Bonhoeffer’s distinction between *Gestalt* and reality which highlights the problematic of the representations portrayed in Schäffter’s different categories of “Fremderfahrungen”.

Is Peck then right when in view of Bonhoeffer he argues for a purely symbolic understanding of India? India is seen to represent a mere projection of openness to growth which “began to find the concrete actuality of its affirmative implications through his [Bonhoeffer’s] reading of the Old Testament and his creative response to the prison experience.”<sup>136</sup> According to Feil it conveys the first signs of “religionsloses Christentum” combining his expectations of India with some of the central theological themes of *Widerstand und Ergebung*.<sup>137</sup> Peck therefore suggests that “Perhaps the failure to go there physically served his development as much as a trip would have done, maybe more.”<sup>138</sup> But one should keep in mind that Bonhoeffer’s continuous engagement with India was motivated by his desire to meet Gandhi in person recognizing the importance of a genuine encounter with the Eastern *Gestalt* of Christianity. India, hence, always represented more than a symbolic “Orient”, harbouring the real possibility of a genuine “Grenzerfahrung”.

It is in the *Ethik* that Bonhoeffer's awareness of the need for genuine encounters is discussed by envisioning the concrete place for the "Gestalt" of Christ: "Es geht also bei dem 'unter uns', 'heute', 'hier' um den Bereich unserer Entscheidungen und Begegnungen', von den abzusehen 'Abstraktion' ist."<sup>139</sup> It expresses Bonhoeffer's concern with "richtiger Erkenntnis" which according to Feil can be summed up in the statement that "Gott ist nicht zu erkennen, sondern nur anzuerkennen."<sup>140</sup> It suggests an ethical and not an epistemological category for a proper understanding of sociality and of the concrete reality of God.<sup>141</sup> At the same time the fundamental distinction between "Erkennen" and "Anerkennen" once again stresses the importance of a genuine "Grenzerfahrung" within the realm of concrete encounters - moments and places where one experiences God's claim on one's life via the human "other".

<sup>1</sup> Keith W. Clements, *A Patriotism for Today. Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1984), 26.

<sup>2</sup> Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 1967, 8 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 138.

<sup>3</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 471.

<sup>4</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 138.

<sup>5</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 138.

<sup>6</sup> Bethge notes: "Durch die Heirat Friedrich Bonhoeffers mit Julie Tafel mischt sich ein revolutionäres Element unter die Vorfahren Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hier finden sich Burschenschaftler, leidenschaftliche Republikaner und Sozialisten, ferner Freimaurer, Auswanderer und Swedenborgianer." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Bethge observes: "Noch war es ein sehr allgemeiner, unbestimmter Bildungshunger des Theologen, den es immer noch nach der Begegnung mit anderen geistigen Welten verlangte." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 138.

<sup>8</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 138. Bethge refers to a communication from H.U. Esche, 25.3.1965.

<sup>9</sup> "Seit der Jahrhundertwende ist das Interesse für Indien und sein Gedankengut in steigendem Maße gewachsen. Die zunehmende Verbesserung, Intensivierung und Ausbreitung des Weltverkehrs, des Güteraustausches und des Nachrichtenwesens haben Indien uns immer näher gebracht und die räumlichen Entfernungen überwunden." Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker* (Stuttgart: K.V. Koehler, 1960), 127.

<sup>10</sup> Peter J Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Internationales Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte der Deutschen Literatur, ed. Wolfgang Frühwald and , no. 2. Sonderheft (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1990), 555.

<sup>11</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 556.

<sup>12</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 556.

<sup>13</sup> Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker*, 127.

<sup>14</sup> Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker*, 128.

<sup>15</sup> Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker*, 128.

<sup>16</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 259-60. Said talks in this respect about "a 'corporate institution for dealing with the Orient,' which, during the colonial period following roughly the late eighteenth century wields the power of 'dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient ...'" Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 259.

<sup>17</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 549.

<sup>18</sup> Glasenapp observes: "Die große Mehrzahl aller Christen weiß nichts über die 'heidnischen' Religionen und will auch nichts über sie wissen, da dies nur ihren Glauben erschüttern würde. Aber auch viele gebildete Theologen lehnen eine Beschäftigung mit fremden Glaubensformen ab, weil sie diese als dem Christentum völlig inkomensurabel ansehen, weshalb jeder Versuch, in sie einzudringen, als überflüssig und zwecklos erscheint." Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker*, 163. Glasenapp refers among others to Karl Barth's radical positioning of revelation against religion, declaring Christianity as the "Krisis aller Religionen". But also Adolf von Harnack is quoted saying: "'Gewiß gebieten der Buddhismus und der Islam über ähnlichen Reichtum; aber im besten Fall lernten wir hier unsicher, was wir bei uns selbst besser und sicherer zu erkennen vermögen.'" Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker*, 164.

<sup>19</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 550.

<sup>20</sup> Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker*, 171.

<sup>21</sup> Staats refers to M.Biehl, *Der Fall Sadhu Sundar Singh*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 620.

<sup>22</sup> Ortfried Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," in *Das Fremde: Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten Zwischen Faszination und Bedrohung*, ed. Ortfried Schäffter (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 23.

<sup>23</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 183.

<sup>24</sup> Bethge explains: "Von seinen Mitstipendiänten, die nach Kalifornien weiterreisten, verabschiedete sich Bonhoeffer in New York mit einem 'Auf Wiedersehen auf der Durchfahrt in Kalifornien!' Seinen neuen Freund im New Yorker Seminar, Paul Lehmann, schleppte Bonhoeffer sofort von Dock zu Dock, um Frachterkapitäne ausfindig zu machen, die einen billig nach Indien mitnähmen, Von den Reiseagenturen ließ er sich Angebote offerieren. Klaus kündigte seinen Bruder bereits bei einer Schwägerin in Manila an und nannte ihm Bekannte auf Sumatra." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 183-84.

<sup>25</sup> Deploring the growing elements of völkischen syncretism in Germany, his friend Helmut Rössler wrote to Bonhoeffer referring to a lecture on India he attended in which the same phenomenon was discussed: "Es war mir erschütternd, gestern in einem ausgezeichneten Vortrag einer Indienkennerin zu hören, daß derselbe Vorgang eines nationalistisch begründeten Synkretismus gegenwärtig die schwerste Versuchung der christlichen Mission in Indien wäre. Es ist überall dasselbe. Die Erde ist kleiner geworden. Die Völker rücken einander näher. Diesselben Ideenmächte und Geistesbewegungen ziehen alle Völker in ihren Bann." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 240.

<sup>26</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 401-02.

<sup>27</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 204.

<sup>28</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Eberhard Amelung and Christoph Strohm, vol. 11 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 33.

<sup>29</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 33.

<sup>31</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 33.

<sup>33</sup> Bonhoeffer struggles as a student chaplain to communicate, for example, the biblical understanding of vicariousness: "Es wird immer unbegreiflicher, daß um des einen Gerechten willen, 'die Stadt verschont werden soll'. Ich bin jetzt Studentenpfarrer an der T.H., wie soll man diesen Menschen solche Dinge predigen. Wer glaubt denn das noch?" Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 32-34.

<sup>34</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 33.

<sup>35</sup> William Jay Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," *Harvard Theological Review* 1968, 438.

<sup>36</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 33.

- <sup>37</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 403.
- <sup>38</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 404.
- <sup>39</sup> Ernst Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 4., Durchges. und Durch ein 2. Nachwort Ergänzte Aufl. (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 388.
- <sup>40</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Goedeke, Martin Heimbucher and Hans-Walter Schleicher, vol. 13 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 75.
- <sup>41</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 391, footnote 32.
- <sup>42</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 391, footnote 31.
- <sup>43</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 391, footnote 31.
- <sup>44</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 391, footnote 31.
- <sup>45</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 404.
- <sup>46</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Jorgen Glenthoj, Ulrich Kabitz and Wolf Krötke, vol. 16 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1996), 325.
- <sup>47</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 404, footnote 13. The editors refer to Adolf von Harnack *Das Wesen des Christentum* (7-8): "Es sind hier nur zwei Möglichkeiten: entweder das Evangelium ist in allen Stücken identisch mit seiner ersten Form: dann ist es mit der Zeit gekommen und mit ihr gegangen; oder aber es enthält immer gültiges in geschichtlich wechselnden Formen. Das letztere ist das Richtige. Die Kirchengeschichte zeigt bereits in ihren Anfängen, daß das 'Urchristentum' untergehen mußte, damit das 'Christentum' bliebe; so ist auch später noch eine Metamorphose auf die andere gefolgt." (DBW 8: 404, footnote 13)
- <sup>48</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 99.
- <sup>49</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 105.
- <sup>50</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 391.
- <sup>51</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 215-26. The talk forms part of a lecture series at the Technische Hochschule in Charlottenburg at which Bonhoeffer works as a student chaplain. Bethge explains the intention of his talk: "Er wollte damit ein Grundgefühl des Studenten seiner Zeit ansprechen und die um sich greifende biologische Anschauungsweise der Nationalsozialisten diskutieren. Er ging aus von dem ersetzbar gewordenen Massenmenschen – auch im akademischen 'Proletariat' – und endete beim Lebensrecht, das aus freiem Opfer für andere, für das Volk und für die Menschheit erwächst." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 270.
- <sup>52</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der Deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick Als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 557.
- <sup>53</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 217.
- <sup>54</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 217.
- <sup>55</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 218. Bonhoeffer explicitly highlights "die Berufsstände des Handwerks", "das Bürgertum", "Ehe und Familie", "Universität und Kirche" as being threatened by the "Daseinsfrage". Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 217-18.
- <sup>56</sup> Bonhoeffer argues: "Welches Daseinsrecht hast du, hast du ein Recht als ein altes Volk jungen heraufblühenden Völkern gegenüberzutreten, den Aufstieg zu verwehren? Hast du ein Recht, als ein junges, starkes Volk das alte mit Gewalt zu überrennen, hinabzustoßen? Hast du ein Recht, deine Grenzen zu dehnen, wenn deine Volksgenossen in der Enge des Innern ersticken?" Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 218.
- <sup>57</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 218.
- <sup>58</sup> See Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 218, footnote 9.
- <sup>59</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 440, footnote 35.
- <sup>60</sup> Bonhoeffer maintains: "Die eine [Antwort] entstand in der fernen fruchtbaren, sonnigen, gestalten- und gedankenreichen Welt Indiens, in der der Leib leicht mit Gütern versorgt und darum die Seele der freien Hingabe und Vertiefung in sich selbst überlassen ist. Die Welt, in der die tätig schaffende Hand der Arbeit sich nur zu öffnen braucht, um die Früchte reichlich zu empfangen, stiftet ihren Bewohnern eine große Stille ins Herz, und die Seele atmet das Leben, das sie in seiner Fülle umgibt, sie dringt ein in dieses große volle gebende Lebensgeschehen, eint sich mit ihm, durchforscht und ergreift seine Rhythmen und seine Tiefen, die im Grund die Tiefen der Seele selbst sind, und die Weiten der indischen Seele sind die Weiten alles Lebendigen. So erkennt sich die sich versenkende Seele wieder in allem Lebendigen wie in tausend Spiegeln, aus jeder Gestalt der Natur vernimmt sie die stille Antwort: tat tvam asi, das bist du, du selbst."

Und es kommt über sie die ewige Scheu vor der Heiligkeit alles Lebens. Es tut ihr weh, wenn die Natur Gewalt leidet, sie selbst wird zerrissen, wenn Lebendiges verletzt wird. Du sollst nicht töten, denn das Leben ist Seele, ja das Leben bist du selbst, du sollst nicht Gewalt tun irgendeinem Lebendigen; du sollst allem in dir wehren und absagen, was dich dazu anreizt, dich durchzusetzen mit Gewalt, den Durst deiner Leidenschaften, deines Hasses und deiner Liebe zähmen, wenn sie dich dahinreißen, dich selbst zu behaupten und anderes Leben zu verletzen. Lerne leiden, lerne vergeben, lerne sterben, all dies ist besser als sich selbst behaupten und Gewalt tun und leben. Nur so wird deine Seele, die ja die Seele des Alls ist, unverletzt und heilig sein. Durch Liebe und Leiden gehen wir in das All, und überwinden es." Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 219-20.

<sup>61</sup> Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 97.

<sup>62</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 220.

<sup>63</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 221.

<sup>64</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 221.

<sup>65</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 221.

<sup>66</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 221.

<sup>67</sup> David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1993), 109.

<sup>68</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 160.

<sup>69</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 160.

<sup>70</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 161.

<sup>71</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, 168.

<sup>72</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 222-23.

<sup>73</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 223.

<sup>74</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 223.

<sup>75</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 270.

<sup>76</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 224-25.

<sup>77</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 225. Bonhoeffer continues to argue: "... unser westliches Denken ist universal, der Begriff der Menschheit ist ein westlicher Begriff. Er regiert unser gesamtes Denken. Aber wir erreichen ihn nicht anders als auf dem geschichtlichen Wege über den Einzelnen und über die Gemeinschaft; hier aber als geschichtlicher Endbegriff hat er seinen unverlierbaren Sinn. Das Leben und das Opfer des Einzelnen gilt dem Bruder, gilt der ihn umfassenden nächsten Gemeinschaft, das Leben und das Opfer der Gemeinschaft gilt dem Brudervolk, der es umfassenden brüderlichen Gemeinschaft, so steigert es sich hinauf bis zur Einsicht, daß das Leben, die Verantwortung und das Opfer zuletzt der Einheit des Menschengeschlechtes gehört, dem Menschen schlechthin, der allein durch das Opfer leben kann." Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 225.

<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer explains: "Auch die Menschheit, auch der Mensch schlechthin, der nichts ist als Mensch, also auch die Menschheit steht für unser Denken unter der Verantwortung für ihr Recht auf Leben und sie nimmt diese Verantwortung auf sich nur dort, wo sie sieht, daß auch sie nur aus dem Sterbenkönnen, aus dem Tode, aus dem Opfer lebt, aus dem Opfer, das sie nun aber zugleich sich selbst, den Brüdern bringt in dem, der sie alle zu Brüdern gemacht hat und von dessen Geist und Leben sie alle Einer sind." Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 225-26.

<sup>79</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 226-27.

<sup>80</sup> Frits de Lange, "A Particular Europe, A Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," Originally a Paper presented at the Fifth International Bonhoeffer Conference, Amsterdam 1988. Bonhoeffer Archive, Union Theological Seminary, New York., in *Bonhoeffer's Ethics: Old Europe and New Frontiers*, ed. Guy C et al. Carter (1991), 85.

<sup>81</sup> Lange, "A Particular Europe, A Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 85.

<sup>82</sup> Lange, "A Particular Europe, A Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 85.

<sup>83</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 220.

<sup>84</sup> Lange, "A Particular Europe, A Universal Faith. The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Its Context," 85.

<sup>85</sup> Feil maintains: "Mit Sicherheit ist anzunehmen, daß das erwartete und erhoffte religionslose Christentum ... aus den westlichen Verbindungen und Verengungen gelöst, zu einer neuen Freiheit führen würde, die – in Analogie zu den Lebensanweisungen und zum Vorbild Gandhis – bestimmt ist von der aktiven Passivität, in den letzten Briefen ausgedrückt durch das Teilnehmen am Leiden Gottes in der gottlosen Welt, und dies in gemeinschaftlichen Handeln und Leben" Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 392.

<sup>86</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 18. To illustrate the repeated "Aufbruch nach Asien" and the perception of far-eastern cultures as representing Europe's childhood Schäffter refers, by way of example, to Herder: "Asien galt Herder als Unschuld, Reinheit und Ursprünglichkeit, als Ursprung und Tiefe des eigenen abendländischen Wesens. Besonders faszinierte ihn der Gedanke der Einheit hinter allem Seienden im asiatischen Denken und die daraus resultierende Friedfertigkeit allem Lebenden gegenüber." Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 18.

<sup>87</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 18.

<sup>88</sup> Bonhoeffer admits: "... ich möchte sie einmal wieder richtig spüren in ihrer ganzen Macht, wenn sie einem auf die Haut brennt und allmählich den ganzen Körper zum Glühen bringt, sodaß man wieder weiß, daß man ein leibliches Wesen ist, ich möchte mich von ihr, statt von Büchern und Gedanken, müde machen lassen, ich möchte mir von ihr meine animalische Existenz erwecken lassen, nicht jenes Animalische, das das Menschsein erniedrigt, sondern das es aus der Muffigkeit und Unechtheit einer nur geistigen Existenz befreit und den Menschen reiner und glücklicher macht." Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 501-02.

<sup>89</sup> "Ich möchte die Sonne einmal nicht nur sehen und etwas an ihr nippen, sondern sie leibhaftig erfahren. Die romantische Sonnenschwärmerei, die sich nur an Sonnenaufgängen und –untergängen berauscht, kennt die Sonne als Macht, als Wirklichkeit garnicht, sondern eigentlich nur als Bild. Sie kann es nie begreifen, warum man die Sonne als Gott verehrte; dazu gehört nicht nur die Erfahrung des Lichtes und der Farben, sondern auch der Hitze. Die heißen Länder sind vom Mittelmeer bis nach Indien und bis nach Mittelamerika die eigentlich geistig schöpferischen Länder gewesen. Die kälteren Länder haben von den geistigen Schöpfungen der anderen gelebt und gezehrt, und was sie original hervorbrachten, die Technik, dient imgrund nicht dem Geist, sondern den materiellen Lebensbedürfnissen. Ob es uns nicht aus diesem Grunde auch immer wieder in die heißen Länder zieht? Und ob einen solche Gedanken vielleicht etwas mit den Qualen der Hitze auszusöhnen vermögen?" Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 501-02. Peck also refers to Bonhoeffer's June 30, 1994 letter: "Another expression of this symbolic function of the 'hot countries' was his statement adopting W.C. Otto's view of the Greek gods as representing 'the wealth and depth of human existence.'" Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 440.

<sup>90</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 393.

<sup>91</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21.

<sup>92</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21.

<sup>93</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 22.

<sup>94</sup> Schäffter, "Modi Des Fremdverstehens," 21-22.

<sup>95</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 440.

<sup>96</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 440.

<sup>97</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 440.

<sup>98</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 382. Bonhoeffer is portrayed as encompassing two very distinct sides presenting himself: "als der, welcher im Wagnis für die Kirche den meisten Freunden vorausseilt; der die Entscheidungen der kirchlichen Opposition in Deutschland – aus der nun bald die "Bekennende Kirche" entsteht – immer noch ein Stück ernster nimmt als die meisten Kampfgenossen; der handelt, als wären die Vorstellungen von morgen schon Wirklichkeit; und der, wenn er dadurch Rückschläge hinnehmen muß, dennoch sofort wieder neu ansetzt. Und den anderen Bonhoeffer, der gegenüber diesem Kämpfen reserviert, ja manchmal fremd erscheint; den plötzlich die Begrenztheit seiner Konfession irritieren kann; den Visionen von einer ganz anderen Verwirklichung des Evangeliums umtreiben." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 382.

<sup>99</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 89.

<sup>100</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 89-90. And he continues to note: "Die Nazis sind diese Menschen jedenfalls nicht und unsere Kommunisten, so wie ich sie im vergangenen Winter

etwas näher kennen gelernt habe, auch nicht. Die Deutschen sind durchgehend rettungslos in einer bestimmten Richtung festgelegt, in der man zwar mehr sieht und weiß als der Amerikaner, aber das ist eben noch nicht viel." Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 90. The editors explain: "B[onhoeffer] spielt hier [mit den Kommunisten] evtl. auf die Hausbesuche bei den Eltern seiner Konfirmanden an ..." Bonhoeffer, *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt: 1931-1932*, 90, footnote 17.

<sup>101</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 298.

<sup>102</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 301.

<sup>103</sup> See Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 305-06.

<sup>104</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 307.

<sup>105</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 379.

<sup>106</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 128.

<sup>107</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 381.

<sup>108</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 468-69.

<sup>109</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 145.

<sup>110</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 145.

<sup>111</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 146.

<sup>112</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 470.

<sup>113</sup> Andrews notes: "I feel strongly that you ought to go to Woodbrooke if possible and meet Mr Horace Alexander 144 Oak Tree Lane Selly Oak, Birmingham, who can tell you all about the 'peace' movement in India. ... Could you possibly visit Woodbrooke and see our friends there who both love and know India and also are trying to follow the Sermon on the mount? There are two especially Jack Hoyland and Horace Alexander. Do write to the latter and arrange a visit even if you cannot see me." Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 130.

<sup>114</sup> Bethge writes about Mira Bai's (formerly Madeline Slade, an admiral's daughter) close cooperation with Gandhi, becoming a disciple in his *ashram* and sharing fully in the Mahatma's fight for freedom. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 470.

<sup>115</sup> See Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 470.

<sup>116</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 301.

<sup>117</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 471. Portraying the difficulties Bonhoeffer had to struggle with at this specific time Bethge's historical snapshot once again underlines the complexity of the situation: "Die Teilnahme an einer konspirativen Bekämpfung Hitlers war Bonhoeffer damals noch undenkbar. Aber in einem gewaltlosen Widerstand, mit offenem Visier Änderungen zu erzwingen, dafür suchte er das Vorbild. Hinter diesem Suchen verbarg sich die geheime Unruhe über einen Kirchenkampf, der zum Selbstzweck werden könnte; der sich mit neugesagten Bekenntnissen und angespannter Betriebsamkeit genügen ließe. So war er auf eine christlich legitime Möglichkeit des Kampfes gegen Hitler aus, der noch jenseits der Ziele und Methoden des Kirchenkampfes lag. Während er in ihm alle erdenklichen Kräfte einsetzte, suchte er in seinem Innersten doch noch nach einem anderen Engagement und dessen Legitimität." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 471-72.

<sup>118</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 469.

<sup>119</sup> Barth writes to Bonhoeffer 1936: "Sie hätten mir ruhig längst wieder schreiben können, auch wenn Sie inzwischen einige theologische Kurven beschrieben haben sollten, die mit den meinigen nicht ganz parallel liefen. Welchen Anspruch sollte ich auch darauf haben, daß Sie mir irgend eine feierliche Rechenschaft schuldig wären? Wissen Sie, was damals nach jener Sache mit dem 'übernächsten Schiff' lange Zeit das Einzige war, was ich von Ihnen wußte? Die seltsame Nachricht, Sie beabsichtigen nach Indien zu gehen, um sich dort bei Gandhi oder einem anderen dortigen Gottesfreund irgendeine geistliche Technik anzueignen, von deren Anwendung im Westen Sie sich große Dinge versprochen! Aber dann war ja vor einem Jahr ihr Inspektor Rott hier bei mir und sorgte dafür, daß das Bild etwas plastischer wurde." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Finkenwalde 1935-1937*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Otto Dudzus, et al., vol. 14 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1996), 250.

<sup>120</sup> Bell wrote to Gandhi in 1934: "A friend of mine, a young man, at present German Pastor in London, Pastor Bonhoeffer, 23 Manor Mount, London, S.E. 23, is most anxious that I should give him an introduction to you. I can most heartily commend him. He expects to be in India for the first two or three months of 1935. He is intimately identified with the Church opposition movement in Germany. He is a very good theologian, a most earnest man, and is probably to have charge of the training of Ordination candidates for the Ministry in the future Confessional Church of Germany. He wants to study community

life as well as methods of training. It would be a very great kindness if you could let him come to you." Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 210.

<sup>121</sup> The editors note: "Es muß offen bleiben, ob es sich um J. Rieger oder H. Jehle handelt; beide berichten später von gemeinsamen Vorbereitungen mit B[onhoeffer], die möglicherweise in verschiedenen Zeitabschnitten stattfanden". Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 213-14, footnote 3.

<sup>122</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 213-14. "Gandhi saß in den vorhergehenden Jahren mehrfach im Gefängnis, zuletzt im August 1933. Er kämpfte in dieser Zeit vor allem gegen das Kastensystem und für die Solidarität mit den 'Unberührbaren'." Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 214, footnote 4. "Gandhis zentrale Wirkungsstätte war damals der Sarbamati-Ashram in Ahmedabad (Nordwest-Indien)." Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 214, footnote 5.

<sup>123</sup> See Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 206-09.

<sup>124</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 471.

<sup>125</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 474. Bethge mentions that bishop Bell wrote for him "nach Mirfield an die *Community of the Resurrection* (Father Talbot), nach Kelham an die *Society of the Sacred Mission* (Father Tribe), nach Cowley an die *Society of St. John's the Evangelist* (Father O'Brien), and die Colleges St. Augustin's in Canterbury (Canon Tomlin) und Wycliffe Hall in Oxford (Rev. E. Graham), ein Zentrum der *Low Church* im Gegensatz zu den vorgenannten Plätzen der *High Church*." According to Bethge Bonhoeffer managed to visit most of these place, even though under strong time constraints. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 474.

<sup>126</sup> Summing up his experiences Bethge notes: "Er ist in Mirfield gewesen und hat die Horen mitgebetet, in denen der Psalm 119 siebenmal in der Woche durchgegangen wird; seitdem gehörte dieser Psalm zu den von Bonhoeffer am häufigsten zitierten Bibelstellen. Er besuchte mit Rieger zusammen Kelham. Bonhoeffer sah sich aber auch in freikirchlichen Seminaren um. Er merkte sich, wie z.B. bei Presbyterianern, Kongregationalisten oder Baptisten die Gesamtkirche und die jeweilige Heimatgemeinde ihren Einfluß auf das persönliche Leben des Kandidaten während der Studienzeit ausübten. Später hat er oft von seinem Eindruck im Methodisten-College in Richmond erzählt, ... Auch die Quäker besuchte Bonhoeffer in ihrem Zentrum Selly Oak bei Birmingham: 'Es hat mir dort sehr gefallen.'" Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 473-74.

<sup>127</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 475.

<sup>128</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 471.

<sup>129</sup> For the following explanations of the "counter-point" see Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 184.. He refers especially to the later lecture of 4.2.32 in Berlin (GS III, 262f.) Ernst Feil's seminal work on Bonhoeffer's theology in fact discovers several pertinent connections between Bonhoeffer's early comments on India and his reflections on a religionless Christianity in his prison letters. In other words the fundamental themes of Bonhoeffer's theology in *Widerstand und Ergebung* are from early on preluded in his appreciation of the East. Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 387-96.

<sup>130</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 184.

<sup>131</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 258.

<sup>132</sup> Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, 3, footnote 3.

<sup>133</sup> Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 261.

<sup>134</sup> Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, 5.

<sup>135</sup> Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, 5.

<sup>136</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 448.

<sup>137</sup> Feil observes: "Damit beginnt in dieser Zeit die Reflexion über das Problem von Weltlichkeit und Arkandisziplin, das mit verschiedener Akzentuierung über die "Nachfolge" und die "Ethik" zu den letzten Briefen führt. Bonhoeffer fragt bereits hier nach der Verkündigung des Evangeliums "mit ganz anderen Worten und Taten" – später würde es vielleicht eher heißen: mit ganz anderen Taten und Worten ... – und verweist dabei ausdrücklich mehrfach mit diesem Brief auf Indien: dort hofft er sehen zu können, "daß Christus da war"! In dieser Erfahrung sucht Bonhoeffer die Unsichtbarkeit Gottes zu überwinden." Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 99-100.

<sup>138</sup> Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 438. Later on Peck even maintains in regard to Bonhoeffer's attraction to India: "Again, as a name and a theme it was probably more influential than a trip would have been." Peck, "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," 440.

<sup>139</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 105.



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<sup>140</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 100.

<sup>141</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 100. Feil continues to show how only the cross of Christ is perceived to be the place where God's invisibility is overcome. Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 101-02.

## 7. A "Theological Geography" of the Boundary

### *Introduction*

My analysis of Bonhoeffer's early journeys abroad tried to describe and evaluate his "Fremderfahrungen". The leading question was to see to what extent and in what ways those experiences reflected or inspired a turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen". It has become clear that this turning to reality expressed itself in different ways. It is in this sense that Bonhoeffer's early journeys conveyed a fundamental desire for "Wirklichkeitsnähe" which was realized whenever "Fremderfahrungen" represented genuine "Grenzerfahrungen". In the following I would like to show how Bonhoeffer's crossings of territorial and socio-political borders go hand in hand with a strong theological concern for the notion of the boundary. His early theological writings, stretching as suggested by Bethge from 1927-33<sup>1</sup>, offer important theological insights on the importance of the boundary in view of safeguarding genuine encounter and sociality. For only where encounter is characterized by an experience of the "other" as boundary authentic sociality and hence reality is seen to emerge. Bonhoeffer's early theological writings provide us, hence, with a powerful theological rationale for the need of genuine "Grenzerfahrungen". In fact, what can be demonstrated is a fascinating interrelationship of his travel encounters and his theological formation, whereby his travel writings pre- or postlude his theological concern with boundary. His early journeys become in this sense an important embodiment of his life long quest for reality and for the christological question "wo sich die Wirklichkeit dessen, zu dem sich der christliche Glaube bekennt, in der Wirklichkeit der Welt zeigt und ihre Konkretion erfährt."<sup>2</sup> This comes out, as we have seen, most clearly in his desire to visit India, while continuously struggling with God's invisibility.

Bonhoeffer's travel experiences reflect hence a journey into reality echoing his desire "die Weltwirklichkeit, möglichst adäquat zu erfassen und in ihr verantwortlich zu handeln."<sup>3</sup> This again explains, as we have seen, the connection Bonhoeffer draws between the influence of his early travels and his father, whose emphasis on precise

definitions of terms also expressed a desire for "Wirklichkeitsnähe". Bonhoeffer's desire, though, is above all driven by the passion to express, "wie Gottes Wirklichkeit in ihrer Offenbarung durch Christus in die Weltwirklichkeit eindringt ..."<sup>4</sup> It hereby once again illustrates Bonhoeffer's intriguing "Einheit von Biographie und Theologie"(Bethge). In fact, the fascinating interrelationship of his travel writings and early theology give witness to what Heinz Tödt described as the unique tension of Bonhoeffer's theology, i.e. "die Dichte, mit der er Wirklichkeitserfahrung und christologisch-ekklesiologische Erkenntnis zusammenbringt."<sup>5</sup>

In unfolding the significance of the notion of the boundary in its cultural and theological meaning for Bonhoeffer's turning, I develop further what Staats coined Bonhoeffer's "theological geography". In mapping this geography I hope to show the fruitfulness of his thinking for a theologically informed response to the present debates on cultural representation and identity within the context of post-colonial contact zones. My use of the notion of the boundary in both its reality as socio-political border and as spatial metaphor for a "theological geography" coincides with the way "Spatial tropes ... are increasingly used to construct arguments and political approaches critical of modernist, colonial, and patriarchal oppressions." The interest in the metaphorical and analytical power of spatial categories is according to Kathleen Kirby, rooted in the fact that "Space brings together the material and the abstract, the body and the mind, the objective interaction of physical subjects and the elusive transience of consciousness (or the unconscious)."<sup>6</sup> Interconnection and difference are thereby marked and measured for "Space, then, seems to offer a medium for articulating ... the many facets, or phases of subjectivity ....: national origin, geographic and territorial mobility (determined by class, gender, and race), bodily presence and limits, structures of consciousness, and ideological formations of belonging and exclusion."<sup>7</sup> James Cochrane therefore rightly maintains that "one cannot imagine any subject except in some relation to real space, contrary to Cartesian models of the ego located in the interiority of the mind."<sup>8</sup> He continues to argue that "Recognizing the space someone occupies and the place by which they are identified is vital to a thoroughly critical attitude, just as it uncovers the pretense of those who claim to be speaking from some absolute space, that is, from no space at all."<sup>9</sup> It is in this sense

that Bonhoeffer's actual border crossings bring into new focus his life-long emphasis on concreteness and connect the reality of revelation and the reality of the world. This is expressed most poignantly in his *Ethik* where he argues:

Die Wirklichkeit Gottes erschließt sich nicht anders als indem sie mich ganz in die Weltwirklichkeit hineinstellt, die Weltwirklichkeit aber finde ich immer schon getragen, angenommen, versöhnt in der Wirklichkeit Gottes vor. Das ist das Geheimnis der Offenbarung Gottes in dem Menschen Jesus Christus. Die christliche Ethik fragt nun nach dem Wirklichwerden dieser Gottes- und Weltwirklichkeit, die in Christus gegeben ist, in unserer Welt.<sup>10</sup>

*Between "Grenzüberschreitung" and "Grenzsituation"*

According to Dieter Lamping it is in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the notion of the border has inspired literary fantasy as never before, especially in Europe and America.<sup>11</sup> And since 1920 German literature also displayed a vast range of factual and fictional works which dealt with borders and border regions.<sup>12</sup> This literature of the border is first of all political literature dealing with territorial borders. And yet very often the political borders include cultural and linguistic boundaries.<sup>13</sup> As far as Europe is concerned, since the French Revolution there has been a constant shifting of territorial borders: "Kein Krieg, der nicht zu neuen territorial Verhältnissen geführt, kein Friedensschluß, der nicht zu weiteren Grenzstreitigkeiten Anlaß gegeben hätte."<sup>14</sup> Being in the center of Europe and pursuing territorial expansions since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Germany in particular was affected by the continuous shifting of borders.<sup>15</sup> Lamping hereby reminds us how much the politics of the border are connected with the issue of identity: "In der Einstellung zu konkreten Grenz-Fragen und generell bei der 'Festlegung der Außengrenzen' manifestiert sich auch das Selbstverständnis der Nation: als Großmacht oder Kleinstaat, als Freund oder als Feind der Nachbarstaaten, als Nation unter Nationen oder als Teil einer übernationalen Einheit."<sup>16</sup> It is in this sense that Bonhoeffer's experiences of and reflections on the border also document – not only implicitly, but explicitly – how his understanding of nation as a territorial, cultural and political entity, its relationship to other nations, and his concept of national identity changed in the course of time. His growing interest in

ecumenism and Christian pacifism for example convey the important realization of nations being, in the words of Timothy Brennan, "imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role ..."<sup>17</sup> By the time the Nazi ideology of military expansion, ethnic cleansing and homogenisation began to control German politics Bonhoeffer saw through the diabolic nature of these cultural fictions and exercised a counter-culture of border crossings. His remarkable openness to the cultural other as seen in his willingness to engage in ecumenical enterprises was of course unpopular even before the Nazis' rise to power. Bethge reminds us that "ecumenism was ostracized as 'internationalism,' an invective indeed, not only used by rising nationalists but supported by fanciful and snooty Lutheranism."<sup>18</sup> It was during the large World Alliance meeting in Hamburg 1932 that the Lutherans Althaus and Hirsch issued the following "famous" statement against all ecumenical activities: "They disown the German fate and perplex the consciences at home and abroad."<sup>19</sup>

Lamping observes a human fascination with borders which cannot be captured in political terms only. He argues that the crossing of a border "ein eigenes Erlebnis [ist], nicht selten ein Einschnitt im Leben und damit wichtig genug, sogar in einer Biographie erwähnt zu werden."<sup>20</sup> Bethge's biography certainly describes Bonhoeffer's journeys in great detail and credits them with being influential in Bonhoeffer's personal and theological formation. As we have also seen, Bonhoeffer himself at various instances not only highlights the importance of his early journeys but also documents the great excitement of the moment one crosses the actual border.<sup>21</sup> Being marked by particular signs and rituals the border is described by Lamping as a place of difference which is governed by a particular set of laws, i.e. "die Gesetze der Peripherie, die sich von denen des Zentrums unterscheiden, ja mit ihnen kollidieren können."<sup>22</sup> As such borders not only divide two politically, socially, culturally and linguistically different systems, but also enable encounter with the "other". This has been also shown by Schäffter's different configurations of the boundary. Borders therefore exhibit a striking ambivalence: "An der Grenze kommt das Verschiedene und Unterschiedene in einem doppelten Sinn zusammen: Es trifft aufeinander, und es geht ineinander über. Insofern ist die Grenze

nicht nur der Ort der Unterscheidung und der Abgrenzung, sondern auch der Ort des Übergangs, der Annäherung und der Mischung.”<sup>23</sup> This ambivalence is said to translate into the following dialectic: “Keine Grenze ohne Grenzübertritt. Ohne ihre eigene Überwindung, ihre eigene Aufhebung ist sie kaum zu denken.”<sup>24</sup> While Bonhoeffer’s actual journeys display such dialectic, his anthropological reflections on the notion of the boundary in his early theological writings problematize this very dialectic of the border. Discussing the destructive reality of constant border crossings between self and “other” from a socio-philosophical perspective Bonhoeffer’s theological response suggests the need for firm boundaries that should not be crossed for the sake of genuine encounters between self and “other”. It is Bonhoeffer’s sensitivity to issues of power, his emphasis on theological anthropology and soteriology and his argument for an ethical transcendence which makes him such an important partner of dialogue when it comes to exploring the notion of the boundary in terms of the reality of post-colonial “contact zones”.

According to Lamping the complexity of the border is now recognized across disciplines such as political geography, history, sociology and ethnology and made the object of interdisciplinary research. Looking at the complexity of the border as discussed in more recent German literature, Lamping identifies “Grenzüberschreitung” and “Grenzsituation” as key interpretative concepts for the description of border experiences. These two categories prove to be insightful for ordering and distinguishing both Bonhoeffer’s actual border experiences and his theoretical reflections on the boundary. “Grenzüberschreitungen” are said to be first of all used in the literal sense of the actual crossing of borders. At the same time such border crossings are also employed in the following metaphorical sense: “Sie werden ... oft zu Modellen oder Metaphern solch anderer, sei es existentieller, sozialer oder kultureller, stets aber emphatisch verstandener Grenzüberschreitungen.”<sup>25</sup> Crossing borders then signifies “eigene Befangenheiten überwinden, neue Möglichkeiten des Lebens erproben oder Freiheit gewinnen.”<sup>26</sup> The term “Grenzsituation” on the other hand, as originally introduced by Karl Jaspers, refers to “nicht hintergehbare Extremsituationen, ‘die mit dem Menschsein als solchem verknüpft, mit dem endlichen Dasein unvermeidlich gegeben sind’ und ‘an den Grenzen

unseres Daseins überall gefühlt, erfahren und gedacht werden': 'Sie sind wie eine Wand, an die wir stoßen, an der wir scheitern.'<sup>27</sup> "Grenzsituationen" are therefore, according to Jaspers, above all "der Tod, der Zufall, der Kampf, das Leiden und die Schuld."<sup>28</sup> It is through these experiences that we grasp "die Begrenztheit und die antinomische Struktur des Daseins" as illustrated through "Widersprüche, die sich nicht lösen, sondern bei klarem Denken nur vertiefen, Entgegensetzungen, die kein Ganzes werden, sondern als unschließbare Brüche an der Grenze stehen."<sup>29</sup> The two experiences of "Grenzüberschreitung" and "Grenzsituation" appear at first sight as being contrary to each other: "In der Grenzüberschreitung erfährt der Mensch seine Freiheit, in der Grenzsituation seine Beschränkung."<sup>30</sup> And yet according to Georg Simmel's anthropology these two experiences determine "den Menschen in seiner Widersprüchlichkeit als das 'Grenzwesen, das keine Grenze hat'."<sup>31</sup> Hence the border is said to pose a constant challenge for every human being, who as individual is defined by the drive toward freedom: "Er ist 'das verbindende Wesen [...], das immer trennen muß und ohne zu trennen nicht verbinden kann', wie es Brücke und Tür, jeweils auf ihre Weise symbolisieren."<sup>32</sup> In other words a human being's relation to the border is characterized by a fundamental conflict between "den Bedürfnissen nach Trennung und Verbindung, nach Abgrenzung und Entgrenzung ..."<sup>33</sup> In this sense the encounter with the border enables self-understanding, "insofern die Dialektik der Grenze ihn auf seine eigene widersprüchliche Natur verweist."

This intricate relationship between experiences of "Grenzüberschreitungen" and "Grenzsituationen" has been poignantly described by Zerner in view of Bonhoeffer's American experience, but is certainly representative as we have seen for all of his early journeys. Bonhoeffer is portrayed as someone who "both respected and relished the testing of one's self against the unfamiliar, the boundaries, the limits of life."<sup>34</sup> Bonhoeffer's interest in new places and people thereby always corresponded with a willingness to engage with life's limits and edges, exposing himself to fringe experiences of those suffering sickness and death, of the destitute, marginalized, and oppressed. He hereby displayed, with the words of Zerner, "an uncanny ability to penetrate to the edges of human experience without really retreating from reality and without being shattered or

broken.”<sup>35</sup> Zerner in particular observes how his willingness to engage with the cultural “other” in various fields of life allowed him “to loosen boundaries between inner and outer, between emotion and reason, between thought and action.”<sup>36</sup> Such richness of new possibilities in combination with significant aesthetic experiences is also seen to have inspired Bonhoeffer’s creativity. Most interestingly Zerner then argues that “The call of and to Christ apparently intensified at the same time that he probed new frontiers of human experience ...”<sup>37</sup>

And yet, I argue that Lamping’s depiction of the complexity of the border in terms of “Grenzüberschreitung” and “Grenzsituation” does not fully capture Bonhoeffer’s critical appraisal of the boundary. And hence also Zerner’s depiction of Bonhoeffer’s probing of new frontiers does not go far enough in illustrating his testing against the boundaries. For Bonhoeffer’s theological geography of the boundary is above all concerned with issues of desire and transgression around the problematic of the knowing and powerful imperial “I”. While Bonhoeffer’s “Grenzerfahrungen” do indeed confirm Lamping’s dictum - “In der Grenzüberschreitung erfährt der Mensch seine Freiheit, in der Grenzsituation seine Beschränkung.” - Bonhoeffer would at the same time, as we will see, want to argue the opposite: “In der Grenzüberschreitung erfährt der Mensch seine Beschränkung, in der Grenzsituation seine Freiheit.” And therefore his willingness to engage with the cultural “other” allowed him not only, as Zerner put it above, to loosen boundaries, but also to see and propose - very much for the sake of the destitute, marginalized, and oppressed - the need of establishing firm boundaries between self and “other” that cannot and should not be transgressed. In other words the boundary becomes a blessing that safeguards the integrity of the “other” and constitutes a turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”. It is this neglected aspect of encounter which helps to explain Zerner’s observation that “The call of and to Christ apparently intensified at the same time that he probed new frontiers of human experience ...” In fact, what we hope to show is that Bonhoeffer’s “Grenzerfahrungen” not only go hand in hand with an experience of reality, but also witness to Christ the ultimate “real” in the sense of being the hidden boundary, center and mediator of reality. It is in this sense that Bonhoeffer’s christological deepening of the notion of the boundary offers a theological rationale for Schäffter’s



emphasis on the need for genuine “Grenzerfahrungen” and for a radical acknowledgement of mutual difference and of not being able to understand.

*The Signatures of Bonhoeffer's “Theological Geography” of the Boundary*

My analysis of Weinrich's study in the literature survey shows how from early on in *Sanctorum Communio* and *Akt und Sein* Bonhoeffer aligned himself with personalism's attempt to counter the loss of reality experienced within idealism and to recover an experience of reality. It strikes us how personalism's central category of “the ungeplante und unplanbare *Begegnung*”<sup>38</sup> and the way it symbolizes reality's contingency corresponds with how Bonhoeffer relates his “Fremderfahrungen” with a turning to reality. What is said to be true of personalism's concept of encounter is therefore well illustrated and in a way dramatized and radicalized in Bonhoeffer's encounters with the reality of the cultural “other”: “Hier [in personalism] kommt die Wirklichkeit nicht im wissenschaftlichen, sondern eher im künstlerischen oder ethischen Sinne zur Sprache. Der Mensch stößt emphatisch auf die Selbstmitteilungen der Wirklichkeit. Daher kann sie nur ästhetisch, dichterisch, prophetisch oder handelnd begriffen werden, und dazu bietet sie sich demjenigen an, der sensibel *ihren erfahrenen Anspruch* an den Menschen wahrzunehmen bereit ist.”<sup>39</sup>

Weinrich's four categories – the aesthetic, the poetic, the prophetic and the active – help to illuminate the diversity of Bonhoeffer's experiences of “Wirklichkeitsnähe” and the epistemological limits of the knowing “I”. It was in Rome that Bonhoeffer's encounter with something “real” about the “church” coincided with an aesthetic appreciation for the liturgical movement of the Catholic mass and for the beauty of cultural diversity within the unity of its worship. His sensitivity and receptiveness to Rome's art world inspired hermeneutical reflections on the art of interpretation and the difficulty of representation. It enabled the discovery of the extent to which immediate context determines aesthetic perception and judgement and of the important role that intuition plays in this process of understanding the “other”. It was in Tripoli that the confrontation with the weight of historical and material reality led to Bonhoeffer's final surrender to the Oriental “other”

revealing the epistemological limits of representation and portraying an aesthetics of imposed silence. It was in Barcelona that he encountered "real" human beings in the midst of Christian hypocrisy, nationalism and provincialism. Bonhoeffer's desire for "Wirklichkeitsnähe" materialized in those encounters firmly rooting his emerging humanistic theology in concrete "Grenzerfahrungen". Bonhoeffer's use of literary figures such as the giant Antäus and the knight Don Quijote in order to affirm a renewed openness and faithfulness to the earth brought to light a poetic and prophetic dimension. His special prophetic commitment to the earth included a rigorous critique of the "Prinzipienethik" and expressed itself in his desire to stand on his own feet, firmly on the ground, and to see things "from below", i.e. from the perspective of those who had to cope with experiences of displacement, of constructing homes away from home, of negotiating identities through processes of accommodation and resistance. It was finally in America that his significant encounters with the social gospel and the destructive reality of racism called for prophetic and active response rooted in the socio-political realities of the day. Mediated by significant friendships these encounters encouraged and nurtured a turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen".

Bonhoeffer's experiences of "Wirklichkeitsnähe" and a genuine boundary, where he is confronted with the claim the reality of the "other" makes on him, resonate with Porter's heterogeneity of multilayered texts, Foucault's notion of the "surplus", Said's "potential for subversion", Berger's "other ways of telling", and Bhabha's "enunciative boundaries". These different concepts all witness to the fact that the response to the challenge of curtailing imperial desires and transgressions cannot simply consist in forging new strategies of encounter, that would establish clear boundaries and safeguard otherness. Instead they all reckon that the reality of the "other" cannot be fully contained or silenced by the knowing I and is therefore able to respond and initiate a process of subversion. In their use of the term "surplus" and "enunciative boundaries" Foucault and Bhabha even employ religious language to capture the mystery of the "other's" resistance. Bonhoeffer's "theological geography" hereby offers a christological interpretation of what is referred to above as "heterogeneity", "surplus", "subversion", "other ways of telling" and "enunciative boundaries". This geography struggles with the

dilemma that the moment the knowing "I" attempts to establish a boundary between self and "other", thinking has, in fact, already surpassed the very boundary he or she is attempting put in place. There can therefore be no self-made genuine boundary. A genuine boundary is not epistemologically posed by the self but ethically imposed on the self. Bonhoeffer's theological exploration of the notion of the boundary wrestles with the difficulty of envisioning such a genuine boundary which is able to safeguard difference and otherness. The nature of the following presentation of the signatures of Bonhoeffer's "theological geography" is thereby not systematic but historical in order to show the development of Bonhoeffer's thought around the very dilemma we have sketched above.

### 1. Ecclesiological Concentration

Personalism's approach to reality as taken up by Bonhoeffer represents a radical critique of idealism's subject-object thinking. For idealism's speculative production of reality engenders the "Wirklichkeitsferne" of a subject that does not enter the concrete world of experience. Weinrich therefore notes how personalism's "Erlebnis der Wirklichkeit dem systematischen Denken eine reale Schranke [setzt]."<sup>40</sup> It is such closed thinking in system, built on Kantian and Hegelian presuppositions, which, as von Hase discusses in his reminiscences, Bonhoeffer early on branded as "phraseology".<sup>41</sup> Summing up Grisebach's critique of thinking in system Bonhoeffer notes: "Jedes System setzt irgendwie Wirklichkeit – Wahrheit – Ich in eins, es maßt sich an, Wirklichkeit zu verstehen, über sie zu verfügen. Der Mensch ist in seiner 'Satanie' versucht, die Wirklichkeit, das Absolute, den Mitmenschen in sich hineinzuziehen, so aber bleibt er in seinem System bei sich selbst und kommt nicht zur Wirklichkeit."<sup>42</sup> Reality is therefore in contrast "der dynamische, konkret erfahrbare Prozeß ethisch-sozial voneinander getrennter und miteinander in verantwortlicher Beziehung stehender individueller Personen."<sup>43</sup> In fact, "Wirklichkeit wird 'erfahren' in der kontingenten Tatsache des Anspruchs der 'anderen'. Nur was von 'außen' kommt, kann den Menschen in seine Wirklichkeit, in seine Existenz, weisen. Im 'Aushalten' des 'Anspruchs des Nächsten' existiere ich in Wirklichkeit, handle ich ethisch; das ist der Sinn einer Ethik, nicht der zeitlosen Wahrheiten, sondern der 'Gegenwart'."<sup>44</sup>

And yet, as Weinrich highlights, Bonhoeffer maintained that personalism's I-You relationship did not fully describe reality's truth. Drawing on certain elements of idealism Bonhoeffer argues: "Alle empirische Interpersonalität ist von einer 'wesensmäßigen Gemeinschaft', von einer 'geistgesetzten Sozialität' getragen." It is the church - whose reality is constituted by God's revelation - which represents such "Gemeinschaft". And therefore reality - characterized by the ethical decision - does not exist "im ungedeuteten Selbstvollzug unplanbarer Interaktion, sondern sie wird in der christologischen Interpretation der Gottursprünglichkeit der Person gedeutet, so daß die Christologie zum entscheidenden Definitionsort menschlicher Personalität und d.h. immer gleichzeitig Sozialität wird."<sup>45</sup> At the same time "Gemeinschaft" becomes the interpretative key "zunächst nur erlebbarer Personalität und entnimmt damit die Wirklichkeit ihrer Unbegriffenheit ..."<sup>46</sup> In other words, "im Begriff der Gemeinschaft wird das kontingente Erlebnis zu einer gedeuteten Erfahrung der Wirklichkeit. In ihr wird das Erlebnis sprachfähig. Sie qualifiziert die unableitbare Begegnung als Wirklichkeitserfahrung."<sup>47</sup>

It is in *Akt und Sein* that the question of reality is then "auf die Interpretation der systematischen Verflechtung der Personalität in das Akt-Sein-Problem verwiesen."<sup>48</sup> In an attempt to overcome both theological actualism and theological ontologism, reality is understood "als durch das Wort Gottes gedeutete geschichtlich-ethische Personalität."<sup>49</sup> As a consequence Bonhoeffer's concept of reality is summed up as follows: "Wirklichkeit erscheint in der Akt-Seinsbezogenheit als ethisch erfahrbare, durch Christus qualifizierte personale Entscheidungswelt, deren Erkenntnis streng auf die Kontingenz des rechtfertigenden und heiligenden Handelns Gottes verwiesen ist. Das geschichtliche Erlebnis gemeinschaftlichen, entscheidungshaften Seins wird in der Kontingenz des Glaubens zu einer Wirklichkeitserfahrung."<sup>50</sup> Hence, while "gemeinschaftliches Sein" may very well be ontologically experienced as a confrontation of the I and Thou, it is only through faith that this event becomes an experience of the reality of the church. Bonhoeffer thereby safeguards against the danger of "einerseits dem Du in platter Umkehrung des idealistischen Subjekt-Objekt-Schemas nun alle Bestimmungspotenz anzuvertrauen ... oder andererseits alle Wirklichkeit in dem

gefeierten kontingenten Ereignis deutungsloser Interpersonalität aufzulösen und jede Rechenschaft als tote, allein die Vergangenheit betreffende Wahrheit zu qualifizieren.”<sup>51</sup> Bonhoeffer maintains: “Sollte aber der Absolutheitsanspruch des Ich nur dem Du abgetreten sein und nicht dem, der über beiden und über dem Absoluten ist, so scheinen wir nicht nur einer rein ethisierenden Auffassung des Evangeliums zuzusteuern, sondern es wird auch der Begriff der Geschichte wie der Theologie unklar, d.h. aber, die Offenbarung wird aus dem Auge verloren.”<sup>52</sup>

Weinrich in this respect underlines the ecclesiological qualifications of Bonhoeffer’s approach: “Wirklichkeit ist in der Theologie Bonhoeffers nicht die sprachlose Dynamik ethischer Interpersonalität, sondern das im Glauben an die Realität der in Christus geoffenbarten Gemeinschaft gedeutete Erlebnis des anspruchsvoll Betroffenseins als Erfahrung konkreter gottursprünglicher Gemeinschaftlichkeit.”<sup>53</sup> The human response to this encounter with reality goes beyond “ästhetischer Bewunderung oder ethischer Hörigkeit ...”<sup>54</sup> Instead understanding the reality of God’s revelation becomes the “Interpretationsschlüssel allen Erlebens.”<sup>55</sup> As a result Bonhoeffer’s argument suggests the following important distinction: “Das konkrete Leben folgt nicht der Notwendigkeit des Begriffs, sondern ist umstellt von unüberschreitbaren Grenzen individueller Erfahrung.”<sup>56</sup> It implies that “das Leben nur im Vollzug wahrnehmbar [ist]; es läßt sich nicht begrifflich erfassen, sondern nur ethisch ernst nehmen.”<sup>57</sup> But since this only captures one important aspect of reality, idealism’s category of the objective spirit constituting “Gemeinschaft” is seen to frame personalism’s ethical existence without neglecting the concrete person. Weinrich therefore rightly observes how Bonhoeffer’s apologetic confines itself to the realm of the church.<sup>58</sup> This particular concentration on the church is seen to reveal his “auch biographisch sichtbar gewordene theologische Redlichkeit.”<sup>59</sup>

My analysis of Bonhoeffer’s pilgrimage to Rome confirmed Bethge’s contention that his experience of Rome in a fundamental way shaped this theological concentration on understanding the concept of church in its concrete nature. At the heart of this inspiring encounter with the Catholic “other” was the experience of something “real”. Interestingly

it is the reality of the church in its visible universality and cultural diversity that strikes Bonhoeffer in a particular way. It is in other words the nature of the church not just as community of believers, but more specifically, as community of believers coming from different cultures and nations, i.e. "Weiße, Schwarze, Gelbe",<sup>60</sup> that leaves a deep imprint on Bonhoeffer. This appreciation for alterity within the unity of Christian fellowship and worship has, as far as I am aware, been neglected in trying to understand *Sanctorum Communio's* concern with sociality and reality. It is in this sense that St. Peter's as, in Bonhoeffer's own words, the "Angelpunkt europäischer Kultur und europäischen Lebens"<sup>61</sup> witnesses to an old European tradition and the renewed challenge, as Bonhoeffer later writes from prison, "die Begegnung mit anderen Völkern und Ländern über das Politische, Gesellschaftliche oder Snobistische hinaus zu einem wirklichen Bildungserlebnis zu gestalten."<sup>62</sup> As seen in his talk to the group of Grunewald schoolboys, part of the Catholic church's attraction is its "complexio oppositorum". In the church's ability to realize both diversity and unity Bonhoeffer even speaks of her as an exemplary country(!): "Es hat selten ein Land soviel verschiedenartige Menschen hervorgeracht wie die katholische Kirche. Mit bewundernswerter Kraft versteht sie ihre Einheit in all der Mannigfaltigkeit zu erhalten ..."<sup>63</sup> St. Peter's was only the first stop of Bonhoeffer's exploration of how identity and otherness are negotiated within the boundaries of the church. Barcelona's German diaspora community and Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church also offered, as I have shown, plenty of opportunity to further study the politics of such negotiations within contexts of displacement and racism. It is there that Bonhoeffer encounters the "other" not only as the cultural "other" but also as the other brother or sister in Christ. Following his American experience Bonhoeffer's essay on "Protestantism ohne Reformation" specifically looks at the hermeneutical pitfalls in understanding and interpreting a foreign church.<sup>64</sup>

But these observations also shed further light on how, as Weinrich argues, Bonhoeffer's theological concentration on the church empowered him for a critique of factual reality: "Bonhoeffer gewann aus seiner Theologie in ihrer Ekklesiozentrik Kriterien, die auch zur Kritik in der vorfindlichen Wirklichkeit befähigten."<sup>65</sup> His experience of St. Peter's provided him in this sense with a concrete and visible example of negotiating otherness

and difference. The distinction Weinrich makes is especially important in view of the following discussion of Bonhoeffer's notion of the boundary as a key concept in his early writings, conveying the profound connections between genuine encounter, otherness and reality. For while Bonhoeffer's theological reflections on the boundary are confined to the realm of the church, his journeys abroad encourage one to consider the implications of his theological argument for his actual "Grenzerfahrungen" in the various contact zones which can be found both within and outside the church. It is also there, in the contact zones outside of the church that, as we have seen, he experiences a turning "zum Wirklichen". How do these experiences of reality then relate to his theological conviction of Christ as the ultimate "real"? It was, of course, from early on, as my analysis on his dream to visit India showed, that Bonhoeffer reckoned with the possibility of finding the ultimate "real" outside the realm of the church within the context of a foreign reality.

My analysis of his travel writings has shown that the problem of genuine encounter gains particular momentum and urgency in the contact zones. It should therefore not surprise us if the actual encounters with the cultural "other" inspired Bonhoeffer's grappling with the question of genuine encounter, just as his socio-philosophical inquiry into sociality prepared the ground for his theological argument in *Sanctorum Communio*. An exploration of Bonhoeffer's notion of the boundary therefore not only has to look at how his theological grappling with sociality provides one with criteria for a theologically informed response to intercultural encounter, but has also to consider the extent to which his experiences of factual reality contributed to the sharpening of his christological understanding of the boundary.

## 2. "The Other" as Boundary

In the opening section of *Sanctorum Communio* Bonhoeffer introduces the theme of sociality by posing the following critical question: "Welchen Weg gibt es nun, um zum fremden Subjekt zu kommen?"<sup>66</sup> As Green has highlighted, for Bonhoeffer this is not just a theoretical question, but a very personal one, reflecting his own struggle with a powerful ego.<sup>67</sup> It also resonates, as we have seen in our analysis of his motifs for

choosing to minister in Barcelona, with the early realization that his own protected and privileged upbringing make it impossible to truly understand those less privileged. His early journeys hence convey, as his involvement in Barcelona and New York illustrate, not only the desire to encounter the cultural "other", but also to expose himself to a more unsheltered existence far away from home which would help him to better understand those less privileged. It is in other words the vulnerability and uncertainty which comes with every border crossing engenders greater openness and sensitivity towards understanding not only those with a different cultural but also class background. Bonhoeffer's opening remarks of his Italian diary describing the actual moment of his border crossing into Italy also grapple with how such first-hand experience of another country enables a genuine encounter with the "other" by transforming one's romantic fantasies and imaginations about a foreign place into reality. In fact, as Bonhoeffer in a similar vein notes in his North African diary, fantasies can never broaden one's horizon, for they differ too much from actual reality. It is hence not so much through reading and imagination as through direct encounter that prejudices give way to something new that cannot be measured according to familiar standards.

These insights correspond with Bonhoeffer's categorical critique of trying to reach the "other" epistemologically in *Sanctorum Communio*: "Es gibt überhaupt keinen Erkenntnisweg dahin, wie es keinen Weg der reinen Erkenntnis zu Gott gibt. Alle idealistischen Erkenntniswege sind im Bezirk des persönlichen Geistes eingeschlossen, und der Weg zum Transzendenten ist der Weg zum Gegenstand der Erkenntnis, zu dessen Erfassung ich die geistigen Formen in mir trage, und der eben deshalb nur Objekt bleibt, und nie Subjekt, 'fremdes Ich' wird."<sup>68</sup> This is seen to be due to idealism's influential concept of the person that prevents an experience of sociality. For "Solange mein Geist das Dominierende ist, das allein den Anspruch auf Allgemeingültigkeit erhebt, solange alle Widersprüche, die mit der Erkenntnis eines Subjekts als Gegenstand der Erkenntnis auftreten können, meinem Geiste immanent gedacht werden, solange bin ich nicht in der sozialen Sphäre."<sup>69</sup> The key to genuine encounter and hence sociality is therefore the moment, "wenn meinem Geiste an irgendeiner Stelle eine prinzipielle Schranke gewiesen wird."<sup>70</sup> Such an experience of the boundary "kann zunächst durchaus in der



intellektuellen Sphäre geschehen, aber eben nicht in der erkenntnis-transzendentalen", <sup>71</sup> for the plain reason that the idealistic object can never constitute a boundary. Important is therefore not, "welche[r] Art diese Schranke ist, sondern daß sie real als solche erlebt und anerkannt wird." <sup>72</sup> The key problem is then the recognition of the true boundary, which is possible only in the social sphere. And yet this does not mean, "daß damit die Schranke selbst nur einen ethischen Inhalt haben könne. Sie kann vielmehr ... rein intellektueller Art sein, d.h. etwa im Streite der Erkenntnisse erfahren werden ..." <sup>73</sup>

It is Bonhoeffer's very personal and concrete experience of the cultural "other" as firm boundary in North Africa, which preludes his attempt in *Sanctorum Communio* to formulate a Christian social philosophy of Geist which is able to overcome the idealist philosophy of "immanent Geist" and its epistemological preoccupation with the subject-object relation. Against the backdrop of this conceptuality in *Sanctorum Communio*, his North African experience can be read as a radical challenge of idealism's powerful knowing "I" by the concrete reality of the cultural "other" anticipating his social-ethical-historical understanding of transcendence. <sup>74</sup> Bonhoeffer's struggle to digest and somehow control what he has seen anticipates his anthropological reflections on the "other" as constituting a "concrete ethical barrier" and provides an intriguing backdrop to visualize a concrete instance in which the claim of the "other" gives priority to ethics over epistemology. <sup>75</sup> The image of the empty vessel threatening to break illustrates idealism's imperial "I" caught by surprise, battling to contain and tame. The barrier is given and not self-imposed as for example in Kantian epistemology. Bonhoeffer's vivid diary notes illustrate how "The barrier must be established outside the perimeter of the individual I, since any barrier erected by the I is relativized from the start." <sup>76</sup> In this sense Bonhoeffer's intellectual capitulation guarantees the integrity of the "other". The "other" remains different and is not reduced to the identity of the "I". Certainly, thorough studies have to follow according to Bonhoeffer, for the epistemological drive is not negated by the ethical. But the "other" as barrier brings about a crisis of representation. It compels one to recognize that to understand the cultural "other" is always an act of translation and representation. The confrontation with the "other" as independent, countering, ethically demanding "will" within the social sphere is proposed as the

primary mode of human relatedness in order to, as Green puts it, “overcome the dehumanizing forms of self-will which the self can never resolve by itself in isolation.”<sup>77</sup>

Reality is then not “der sich selbst wissende und selbst tätige Geist”<sup>78</sup> but constituted in the moment of genuine encounter: “Im Augenblick des Angesprochenwerdens steht die Person im Stande der *Verantwortung* oder anders gesagt, der Entscheidung; ... sie ist im Stande der Verantwortung mitten in der Zeit, und nicht in deren kontinuierlichem Verlauf, sondern im wertbezogenen – nicht werterfüllten! – Augenblick.”<sup>79</sup> Therefore, according to Bonhoeffer the problem of reality is the problem “der realen Schranke und damit der sozialen Grundbeziehungen ...”<sup>80</sup> And yet, “Nicht jedes sich seiner selbst bewußte Ich weiß von der ethischen Du-Schranke. Wohl weiß es von einem fremden Du – das mag sogar die notwendige Voraussetzung für das ethisch-reale Du-Erlebnis sein –, aber es weiß das Du doch nicht als ein schlechthin fremdes, anspruchsvolles, schrankensetzendes, d.h. eben es erlebt es nicht real, sondern letztlich als irrelevant gegenüber dem eigenen Ich.”<sup>81</sup> The Christian concept of person therefore maintains that “*menschliche Person nur in Relation zu der ihr transzendenten göttlichen, in Widerspruch gegen sie wie in Überwältigung durch sie, [entsteht].*”<sup>82</sup> The consequence is: “Nur aus der absoluten Zweiheit von Gott und Mensch entspringt die Selbsterkenntnis der ethischen Person. Je deutlicher die Schranke erkannt wird, desto tiefer tritt die Person in den Stand der Verantwortung.”<sup>83</sup> It is the “other” as the Thou who “setzt dem Subjekt die Schranke, bestätigt von sich aus den Willen, an den der andere anstößt und zwar eben so, daß dieser andere Wille für das Ich ein Du werde.”<sup>84</sup> The consequence is: “Die Person kann die andere Person nicht erkennen, sondern nur anerkennen, an sie ‘glauben’. Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie finden hier ihre Grenzen, die ethische Personhaftigkeit des anderen ist weder ein psychologisch faßbares Faktum noch eine erkenntnistheoretische Notwendigkeit.”<sup>85</sup> “In fact the ‘I’”, as De Gruchy sums up Bonhoeffer’s argument, “does not know itself in the subject-object relation of Cartesian modernity, but becomes itself in encountering and acting responsibly towards the ‘other’ as ‘other.’”<sup>86</sup> Taking its lead from personalism, the person is seen to arise through ethical encounter with the “other”: “The ‘Thou’ presents the ‘I’ with a barrier beyond which the ‘I’ cannot go. This experience is an acknowledgement of transcendence which evokes

ethical responsibility. In this way the 'I' encounters and knows the divine 'Thou' in, with and under the human 'Thou'.<sup>87</sup> But De Gruchy also points out an important distinction Bonhoeffer makes in his "social ontic-ethical basic-relations of persons". For on the one hand the emphasis is on the "other", the "You" as "an image of the divine You", through whom God encounters me. In other words the claim the "other" makes upon me is always God's claim. But at the same time "it is always also the claim of the 'other'." "Indeed it is of fundamental importance for Bonhoeffer", De Gruchy argues, "that the 'other' always remains the 'other'; and not just a substitute for God, a means to relate to God."<sup>88</sup> In Bonhoeffer's own words:

Nicht ein Mensch von sich aus kann den anderen zum Ich, zur ethisch verantwortungsbewußten Person machen. *Gott oder der Heilige Geist tritt zum konkreten Du hinzu, nur durch sein Wirken wird der andere mir zum Du, an dem mein Ich entspringt, m.a.W. jedes menschliche Du ist Abbild des göttlichen Du. ... Das göttliche Du schafft vielmehr erst das menschliche, und weil es von Gott gemacht und gewollt ist, ist es ein wirkliches, absolutes und heiliges Du, wie das göttliche auch. ... Der andere Mensch ist 'Du' nur, sofern Gott ihn dazu macht. Nur in Gott ruht der Anspruch des anderen, deshalb bleibt es aber doch der Anspruch eben des anderen.*<sup>89</sup>

But it is not only individuals who discover their personal identities through ethical encounters with others. For "Bonhoeffer holds that communities with their distinctive cultures ('Objective spirit [Geist]') also have a personal character; so a community can be regarded in a special sense as a 'Collective person'.<sup>90</sup> Hence Bonhoeffer's confrontation with Tripolis as a "collective person" has to be interpreted as ethical in character suggesting a particular ethical responsibility towards the cultural "other". It is an encounter like this which illustrates,

daß im Augenblick des Bewegtseins, des Stehens in der Verantwortung, des leidenschaftlichen ethischen Kampfes, der Heimsuchung des Menschen durch den ihn überwältigenden Anspruch die Person als bewußte erzeugt wird; daß also aus der konkreten Situation die konkrete Person erwächst ...<sup>91</sup>

The claim the "other" makes upon me is hence argued for theologically and informs Bonhoeffer's understanding of encounter in *Sanctorum Communio*. It is this Christian social philosophy which serves as a guide to community.

The dramatic cultural "clash" experienced by Bonhoeffer in North Africa therefore offers an important entry into our "theological geography" of the boundary. Tripolis confronts Bonhoeffer with the reality of power as a social and political problem which anticipates his critique of destructive power in the corporate life of societies and nations in *Sanctorum Communio*. Dietrich and Klaus Bonhoeffer's letters reveal careful observations of the socio-political situation in occupied Tripolis. The negative impact of Italy's colonial occupation is described and analysed in terms of the existing hierarchies and power plays between Italians, Arabs, Jews, Abyssinians and Sudanese. Such an intertextual reading of his travel writings and theological thoughts earths our discussion in the historical reality of colonialism. Issues of representation, identity, translation and alterity arise and build an important bridge for our engagement of Bonhoeffer as postcolonial theologian. In this respect what will be shown as Bonhoeffer's fundamental attack of the powerful knowing "I" offers a crucial starting point for developing a model of encounter which is able to overcome this major European configuration threatening to undermine the task of theological reconstruction. It corresponds with the way "third world thinkers have all criticized the elements of control, manipulation, and representation that they associate with Cartesian thinking"<sup>92</sup>:

The *cogito* is castigated as the conceptual expression of privatistic, imperialistic, and exploitative attitudes, and of the denigration of the body as well. ... Cartesian dualism, in particular, is criticized as the hidden yet (for that very reason) powerful cultural vehicle for the rationalization and perpetuation of various forms of oppression: everything that falls outside the normative (that is, white, male, western European/North American) subjective consciousness or 'gaze' is relegated to the inferior status of that which is 'represented', 'objectified', and thereby, controlled. On this view, Cartesian dualism is the condition of the possibility of the depiction of 'otherness' and, consequently, of the maintenance of forms of domination; sophisticated philosophy and theology implicitly codify and perpetuate in abstract terms the harsh realities of a world of racism, sexism, and economic and political exploitation.

The dismantling of those harsh realities will, in turn, entail the dismantling Cartesian modes of thought and cultural conceptualization.<sup>93</sup>

The strength of Bonhoeffer's critique is, according to Young, that it "begins with the realization that one never attains an appreciation of the Other, i.e. 'alien subjects,' from 'the purely transcendental category of the universal' – from an abstract starting point ..."<sup>94</sup> And therefore "If a Christian encounters the Other concretely, he/she acknowledges the impenetrability of the Other – the alien-ness that nurtures community because it is, itself, what is inviolate about sociality: the given, un-impeachable enigma of the Other's subjective self."<sup>95</sup> Pondering some of the implications for the issue of racism Young observes how such an approach prevents the "other" from being objectified: "To objectify them, as racists then do objectify those they think are beneath them, is to lose touch with reality. Not only is the object an illusion, but the one who refuses, sinfully, to yield to another's subjectivity has forfeited community."<sup>96</sup> It is hence the acknowledgement of the boundary which prevents racism from thriving. To further illustrate the important notion of the boundary Young compares it with the dissonance of jazz music:

The distinctive voices of the musicians – for each artist plays a different rhythm – are greatly esteemed. Neutralize such distinctions – meaning the dissonance – and destroy the creative impression that is the ensemble itself. That would not be ethical; for dissonance is more than music; it is also a way of life that enjoys diversity and spontaneity – the beauty and rightness of which is the poetry and magic of the music itself.<sup>97</sup>

It is in this sense that *Sanctorum Communio's* "dissonant art of being-in-community" and its notion of the "other" as boundary offer an important theological commentary on the question of encounter and how the power play involved eradicates the dissonant beauty of difference and otherness.

According to Green it is this sensitivity to the problem of power which "led him [Bonhoeffer] to be one of the earliest and most uncompromising opponents of Nazi tyranny with its elaborate mythology of power worship, its grandiose program of

conquest, and its dehumanized social vision. The same sensitivity made him an advocate of the Jews within Germany, and a tireless worker in the ecumenical movement for international peace.”<sup>98</sup> To substantiate his argument of the recurrence of the theme of power in society Green draws our attention to several other texts. As mentioned in the chapter on Barcelona, Bonhoeffer himself employs the language of Lebensraum philosophy in his lecture on Christian ethics. The justification of war is traced back to the question of history, Volk, and God. But already in his lecture on “The Right of Self-Assertion” in February 1932, as discussed in the chapter on *Dreaming India*, Bonhoeffer critically looks at the role of the machine and war in Western history by comparing it to the East. The West’s “violent, competitive, and destructive assertion of life through the will for power”<sup>99</sup> is countered with interpreting the right of self-assertion as the Christian and human right to serve others. Commenting on this striking change of thought Green notes: “The contrast between this attitude and that of the Barcelona address is dramatic.”

Discussing “The Theological Basis of the World Alliance” he addressed an ecumenical youth peace conference in Czechoslovakia in 1932 and criticized “the exploitation of the weak by the strong, the life and death competition of economics, war, the class struggle, nationalism, and strife (Kampf) within nations.”<sup>100</sup> He questioned in this respect the doctrine of “orders of creation” as an adequate theological foundation for Christian ethics because of its abuse in seeking to “justify any existing social practices as expressions of the will of God.”<sup>101</sup> His radical critique of modern war in the same address referred to Bismarck as “a symbol of Prussian military imperialism, constitutional arbitrariness, and reactionary military elitism—in short, militarist power-politics.”<sup>102</sup> At another ecumenical conference in August 1932 in Switzerland on “The Church is Dead” Bonhoeffer identifies the “lust for power” “in economic life, in political life, in ideological battles, in patriotism fueled by hate, in the world scene bristling with weapons, in nations like Germany seeking to compensate for humiliation by a new titanism, in the desperate hunger of millions of men.”<sup>103</sup> Discussing the question of the church’s responsibility for political life in a paper from November 1932, Bonhoeffer argued that “If it’s political word is to be effective, the church cannot afford to replicate the very problem which it seeks to address; peace, truth, and justice – not a position of

power and privilege – is what the church should seek in society.”<sup>104</sup> In his address on “The Führer and the Individual in the Younger Generation” in 1933 Bonhoeffer discusses another aspect of the problem of power. He critically evaluates the extent to which “Technical power is put at the service of misguided political power and [how] its consequence is destruction and meaninglessness.”<sup>105</sup> Attacking in particular the German Führer concept Bonhoeffer made the following observation: “The totalitarianism of the individual Führer is the vehicle for the collective egotism of the people; the unlimited power of the leader is the instrument for the wishes and ambitions of the people.”<sup>106</sup> Summing up Bonhoeffer’s historical diagnosis of dominating power, Green emphasizes how Bonhoeffer “was particularly concerned with the destructive power evident in war, in anti-semitism and racism generally, in the ruthless competition of capitalist economics, in the dehumanizing uses of technology, and so on; above all, he theologically and personally confronted the demonic synthesis of all these destructive forms of power in Nazism.”<sup>107</sup> It hence becomes clear that for Bonhoeffer “power as a corporate social and political problem was as important a part of soteriology as the perverse forms of power in the individual person.”<sup>108</sup>

### 3. “The Other” as Christ the Boundary

And yet the question remains: How does one safeguard against objectification, since any reflection is inevitably interpretation and representation.<sup>109</sup> In this respect *Akt und Sein* and Bonhoeffer’s attempt to develop a theological anthropology prove to be another important building stone towards safeguarding difference and transcendence. In grappling with how transcendental and ontological philosophical traditions and the theologies drawing upon them understand human existence, Bonhoeffer tries to come to grips with the problem of act and being.<sup>110</sup> Summing up Bonhoeffer’s resolution of the anthropological problem, De Gruchy notes, that “the self is redeemed from beyond itself through faith, and that this takes place where the Word is preached, and where the ‘I’ is brought into a new relationship with others ‘in Christ’.”<sup>111</sup> But in restating his theology of sociality in order to resolve the problems created by both theologies of act and being Bonhoeffer also sheds further light on the problematic of the “other” as boundary. In fact

it is around the question of the barrier that Feil observes a major shift in Bonhoeffer's thinking from his dissertation to his *habilitatio*: "Wurde dort [in *Sanctorum Communio*] durch das Du des Anderen bzw. Gottes echte Grenze konstituiert, so geschieht dies nun [in *Akt und Sein*] durch Christus ..." <sup>112</sup> In his critique of both the transcendental and ontological approaches Bonhoeffer unfolds a theological understanding of human existence with Christ replacing the "other" as the boundary that guarantees true transcendence:

In 'Sanctorum Communio' war unter dem Einfluß des Ich-Du-Schema das Du des Anderen und das Du Gottes unvermittelt als Grenze angegeben; in 'Akt und Sein' ist *Christus* ausdrücklich an diese Stelle gesetzt. Nicht mehr tritt Gott oder der Heilige Geist zum konkreten Du hinzu, wie es zuvor der Fall war, sondern Christus steht jetzt in der Mitte ... <sup>113</sup>

This becomes most evident when Bonhoeffer maintains: "Gott gibt sich in Christus seiner Gemeinde und jedem einzelnen als Glied dieser Gemeinde, und das so, daß das handelnde Subjekt in der Gemeinde, verkündigend und glaubend, Christus ist." <sup>114</sup> The "other" then becomes "Christus für uns in Forderung und Verheißung, in existentieller Begrenzung von außen, und zugleich als solche zum Bürgen der Kontinuität der Offenbarung." <sup>115</sup> In further unfolding this "von außen" Bonhoeffer explains: "Es ist nicht das Außen der Außenwelt, sondern das meine ganze personale Existenz als schuldige wie als begnadigte in Anspruch nehmende Außen der Christusperson, das Außen der soziologisch-theologischen Kategorie, das als echtes *Außen* nur erkannt wird, wo der Mensch *in* Christus ist." <sup>116</sup> It is in this sense that "Außen" is Christ the boundary who establishes the ethical-historical reality. <sup>117</sup> As such Christ lifts the "other" "aus der Dingwelt, der er als Seiender natürlich weiter zugehört, in die soziale Personensphäre ..." <sup>118</sup> The consequence is: "Erst durch Christus begegnet mir der Nächste als jenseits meiner Existenz mich in absoluter Weise in Anspruch nehmend. Erst hier ist Wirklichkeit ungedeutet reine Entscheidung. Ohne Christus ist mir auch der Nächste nur noch Möglichkeit der Selbstbehauptung durch 'Aushalten seines Anspruchs' (Grisebach)." <sup>119</sup> But also the "Außenwelt" cannot be assigned to the sphere of "es gibt": "Das 'es gibt' setzt die betrachtende Situation des uninteressierten Konstatieren voraus, die es dem Sein



der Offenbarung gegenüber auch in der Außenwelt, d.h. in der Schöpfung, nicht gibt, eben weil das Offenbarungs-Sein Grund meines Person-Seins ist."<sup>120</sup> Feil notes how these thoughts anticipate his view on reality in the *Ethik*, where reality "nicht 'ein Neutrum, sondern der *Wirkliche*, nämlich der menschengewordene Gott' ist."<sup>121</sup> And in this sense the world, which is confronted with Christ's claim, can not be objectified, but is "von Christus bestimmte Wirklichkeit."<sup>122</sup>

This shift to Christ as boundary has to be further unfolded in terms of Bonhoeffer's distinction between the *actus directus* and *actus reflexus*.<sup>123</sup> In fact, as Feil observes, *Sanctorum Communio*'s "Sein-in-der-Gemeinde" is complemented in *Akt und Sein* "durch den auf Christus gerichteten Akt."<sup>124</sup> Young explains how Bonhoeffer assumes

that being encompasses prereflective consciousness as well as reflective consciousness. In its prereflective mode, consciousness is drawn to someone spontaneously – turns to her as it were; and this immediate turning may be said to be an act – the reference to, the intentionality toward, what is other than the self. Even though consciousness and act operate closely together in this, Bonhoeffer makes it clear that consciousness is closer to being than to act.<sup>125</sup>

And hence "while being is appropriated through the givenness of consciousness, act *must be considered wholly alien to being*."<sup>126</sup> "The *actus directus*," then, "which Bonhoeffer himself calls *direct* consciousness, is that initial response"<sup>127</sup> which knows no self-sufficiency. For "Only when existence, supposed in permanent orientation to transcendence, is said not to be able to understand itself (or only to understand that it does not understand itself) is the true sense of *the act* expressed."<sup>128</sup> The *actus directus* is, as Feil quotes Bonhoeffer, directed "'auf Christus und durch Christus begründet' ... und damit vorläufig und rückläufig auf Christus bezogen und durch ihn konstituiert ..."<sup>129</sup> The implications for genuine encounter are then summed up as follows: "Durch die Christusperson als echte Grenze wird im *actus directus* auf Christus hin das ewig ichbeschlossene 'cor curvum in se' ... und damit auch die Reflexion aufgebrochen."<sup>130</sup> It is important to note in this respect "daß das 'cor curvum in se' überwunden wird, weil in Christus mir der andere zum Du geworden ist; in Christus gibt es erst die 'Existenz im sozialen Bezug'. 'Sein in Christus ist Gerichtetsein auf Christus, das nur möglich ist

durch Schon-Sein in der Gemeinde Christi.”<sup>131</sup> And yet, as Young explains by once again drawing on the example of jazz music, that the direct act is always automatically displaced by reflection:

Not unlike the way one is riveted to the spirited music created at the spur of the moment in jazz improvisation – yet must be content with only the memory of the startling experience – the *actus directus* dissipates after the occasion is over. One, in reflecting upon the occasion during which such immediacy was experienced, is faced with the absence of that event itself.<sup>132</sup>

It is in this sense that “the self knows its moment of direct consciousness as truly short-lived.”<sup>133</sup> Reflection on consciousness is therefore less important than the direct consciousness of the “other”. It is the *actus directus* that “will bear on how one lives: How did one look at this Other in the first place; what was arresting about this Other?”<sup>134</sup> The importance of direct consciousness resonates with the role Bonhoeffer attributes to intuition in interpreting art<sup>135</sup> and with his numerous “Grenzerfahrungen” which illustrate moments of encounter with the arresting “other”. The issue of direct consciousness becomes “all the more critical when act abuses being in racist intentions.”<sup>136</sup> European philosophy and its metaphysics is therefore portrayed by Young as having legitimized racist attitudes. The fact, for example, that Hume and Kant had looked on the Africans racistly “makes Bonhoeffer’s revisiting of Germany’s great philosophers in *Act and Being* fascinating ...”<sup>137</sup> Bonhoeffer’s critique showed that there was no real transcendence in Kant. As a consequence the world itself becomes but a projection of the self, in fact, “a projection of erudite, European consciousness upon the world’s alterity.”<sup>138</sup> In contrast genuine theology has to reflect on the givenness of the “other” who cannot be domesticated. And therefore “All depends on whether there has been an *actus directus* in reference to God’s Thou, and in turn to the Thou of the neighbour – his or her ‘race’ notwithstanding.”<sup>139</sup> This understanding of faith as *actus directus* proves to be a constant factor in Bonhoeffer’s theological development.<sup>140</sup> Assimilating Bonhoeffer’s legacy, Young then concludes: “When Christ ... is the Thou of the *actus directus*, the non-being of such racist acts is replaced with the being of community, for one sees ‘only Christ, as ... Lord and ... God.’<sup>141</sup> And therefore “what gives more

credibility to his [Bonhoeffer's] witness than his scholarship (*actus reflexus*) was his hands-on experience (*actus directus*) with African-Americans."<sup>142</sup> Bonhoeffer's "Grenzerfahrungen" throughout his early journeys illustrate the significance of these hands-on experiences and the significance of the *actus directus* for Bonhoeffer's experiences of "Wirklichkeitsnähe". Schäffter's first three *modi* of "Fremderfahrung", by contrast, exemplify the phraseological limitations of the knowing "I's" *actus reflexus*.

#### 4. "The Other" as Christ the Boundary in the Center<sup>143</sup>

But Bonhoeffer's move of introducing the "other" as Christ the boundary and unfolding it in terms of the distinction between the *actus directus* and the *actus reflexus* does still not fully guarantee a genuine boundary. Hans-Richard Reuter, the editor of *Akt und Sein*, therefore maintains that "Bonhoeffer in der Konsequenz von 'Akt und Sein' zur christologischen Konzentration seiner Theologie, zur Wendung von der 'Grenze am Rand' zur 'Grenze in der Mitte' geführt [wird]."<sup>144</sup> It marks an important new development in Bonhoeffer's "theological geography" of the boundary. His emphasis of the "Grenze am Rand" was, as Reuter highlights, necessary in order to locate "den Umschlag des Gesetzes ins Evangelium an der Stelle ..., wo sich das konkrete Ich an der Grenze seiner Autonomie in Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit gestellt erfährt ..."<sup>145</sup> The experience of the boundary and hence reality is therefore achieved in *Sanctorum Communio* und *Akt und Sein* through the "übermächtige Objektivierung des Ich durch das Du ..."<sup>146</sup> But such objectification, in turn, raises the problem of how "das Du vor seiner Fixierung als heteronome Übermacht bewahrt werden [kann] ..."<sup>147</sup> For in this case one would have simply exchanged the overpowering self with a dominating "other".

At the same time the notion of the boundary has to be safeguarded against the abuse of being "eine bloß gesetzte Kategorie ..., die dem Hegelschen Argument verfallen möchte, als solche immer schon im Denken vermittelt und aufgehoben zu sein ..."<sup>148</sup> This can according to Reuter only be avoided "wenn 'Grenze' zugleich als *Grund* zu denken – bzw. nun nicht mehr als Grund zu *denken*, sondern als wirkliche 'Mitte' vorausgesetzt ist."<sup>149</sup> It is in *Schöpfung und Fall* that Bonhoeffer's Christ-centered anthropology in fact

combines “Grenze” with “Mitte” by distinguishing between the “Grenze am Rand” and the “Grenze in der Mitte”. Taking his lead from the creation story in Genesis 2:8-17 Bonhoeffer interprets the forbidden tree of “the knowledge of good and evil” as being symbolic of a human being’s boundary in the middle.<sup>150</sup> He can therefore suggest:

*Die Grenze des Menschen ist in der Mitte seines Daseins, nicht am Rand; die Grenze, die am Rand des Menschen gesucht wird, ist Grenze seiner Beschaffenheit, Grenze seiner Technik, Grenze seiner Möglichkeit. Die Grenze, die in der Mitte ist, ist die Grenze seiner Wirklichkeit, seines Daseins schlechthin. In der Erkenntnis der Grenze am Rand ist die Möglichkeit innerer Grenzenlosigkeit stets mitgegeben, in der Erkenntnis der Grenze in der Mitte ist das gesamte Dasein, das Menschsein in jeder möglichen Haltung begrenzt.*<sup>151</sup>

This shift from the margin to the center marks an important new development in Bonhoeffer’s “theological geography” of the boundary. Bethge talks about how *Schöpfung und Fall* reaches out for the “Mitte des Lebens”.<sup>152</sup> “Nirgends”, he continues, “hatte bisher für Bonhoeffer der Begriff der ‘Mitte’ gegenüber den Grenzen und Rändern des Lebens eine solche Rolle gespielt.”<sup>153</sup> The contrast between “Möglichkeit” and “Wirklichkeit” we encountered before with Bonhoeffer is now re-visited in spatial terms. Once again Bonhoeffer is concerned with confronting the problem of “Grenzenlosigkeit”, but this time locating genuine encounter and the experience of reality in what he identifies as the center. And it is right there in the center, beside the tree of knowledge, that “der Baum des Lebens, d.h. der lebenspendende Gott selbst. *Er ist Grenze und Mitte unseres Daseins zugleich ...*”<sup>154</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s shift of the boundary into the center offers an important theological interpretation for what has been introduced and described in my thesis as genuine “Grenzerfahrung”, “surplus”, or “enunciative boundaries”. For Bonhoeffer’s struggle for a genuine boundary which cannot be transgressed resonates with postcolonial practices of claiming difference and otherness. And yet, critics of discourse theory, as we have tried to show, have made it very clear that while one cannot avoid colonial practices of representation which do violence to the reality of the “other”, the “other” in fact cannot ever be silenced. Instead the “other” is always able to “write” back in the sense of

embodying an "enunciative boundary" in the center which discloses a "surplus". Bonhoeffer's distinction between "Möglichkeit" and "Wirklichkeit" and his understanding of the boundary in the center provides a theological interpretation for the "other's" resilient resistance and earths the reality of the *actus directus* in day to day encounters. As short lived as this moment of pre-reflective encounter might be, it is powerful enough to question one's projection of the "other" and to help to see the "other" brother or sister differently.

The boundary in the center is used in a two-fold sense in *Schöpfung und Fall*, distinguishing between the situation before and after the Fall. Adam *before* the Fall knows the boundary through knowing God. But he knows the boundary "nicht als überschreitbare, sonst wüßte er um das Böse, aber er weiß sie als gegebene Gnade seiner Geschöpflichkeit und Freiheit. Er weiß also auch um sein Leben als allein durch seine Grenze mögliches, er lebt aus dieser Grenze, die in der Mitte ist."<sup>155</sup> The boundary is therefore "Gnade, denn sie ist Grund für Geschöpflichkeit, Freiheit, Grenze ist Mitte."<sup>156</sup> The kind of freedom that comes into view is "keine Qualität des Menschen, keine noch so tief irgendwie in ihm aufzudeckende Fähigkeit, Anlage, Wesensart, ... kein Besitz, kein Vorhandenes, Gegenständliches ..."<sup>157</sup> It is instead "eine Beziehung zwischen zweien."<sup>158</sup> To be free therefore signifies "'frei-sein-für-den-anderen', weil der andere mich an sich gebunden hat."<sup>159</sup> Freedom is hence "das einfach Geschehende, sich Ereignende, durch den anderen an mir Geschehende."<sup>160</sup> The reason for it is found in the particular character of God's freedom: "Das ist die Botschaft des Evangeliums selbst, daß Gottes Freiheit sich an uns gebunden hat, daß seine freie Gnade allein an uns wirklich wird, daß Gott nicht für sich frei sein will, sondern für den Menschen."<sup>161</sup> And "Daß Gott frei ist, heißt für uns in der Mitte durch Christus Existierende ... nichts als daß wir frei sind für Gott."<sup>162</sup> It is hence the reality of the boundary in the center that issues a particular understanding of freedom and anticipates Bonhoeffer's "ethic of free responsibility".

This mystery of the boundary takes concrete shape in the creation of Eve as Adam's counterpart: "*Grenze und Leben*, die unberührbare, unzugängliche Mitte des Paradieses,

um die das Leben des Adam kreist, sie *nimmt* Gestalt *an* und wird unter der Schöpferhand Gottes zum Beistand Adams."<sup>163</sup> The boundary expressed as the bodily presence of the "other" entails the "Erkenntnis des anderen als des Geschöpfes Gottes, als des anderen schlechthin, als des neben mir stehenden, mich begrenzenden und zugleich das Wissen um die Herkunft des anderen aus mir, aus meinem Leben und darum die Liebe zu dem anderen, und das von ihm geliebt werden, weil er ein Stück von mir ist ..."<sup>164</sup> It is this particular reality that should enable Adam "seine Grenze leichter, d.h. in der Liebe zum Menschen [zu] tragen ..."<sup>165</sup> For the other human being then becomes "die mir von Gott gesetzte Grenze, die ich liebe, und die ich um meiner Liebe willen nicht überschreiten werde."<sup>166</sup> And in bearing the boundary together such sociality is seen to reveal its character as "Kirche".<sup>167</sup>

Adam's relationship to the boundary *after* the fall is, in contrast, not characterized by love, but by imperial hatred and "grenzenloser" expansion. For "wo die Liebe zum anderen zerstört ist, [kann] der Mensch auch seine Grenze nur noch hassen ..."<sup>168</sup> The boundary is transgressed for the sake of possessing or destroying the "other", because now he sees the "other" no longer "in der Liebe, sondern er sieht ihn in dem ihm Gegenübersein, er sieht ihn in der Entzweiung."<sup>169</sup> The meaning of the boundary changes, since it is "jetzt nicht mehr die den Menschen in der Einheit seiner geschöpflichen und freien Liebe haltende Gnade, sondern die Grenze ist nun die Entzweiung."<sup>170</sup> With the loss of the boundary Adam also loses "seine Geschöpflichkeit."<sup>171</sup> In fact the "grenzenlose Adam ist auf seine Geschöpflichkeit hin nicht mehr anzureden."<sup>172</sup> The "grenzenlose Mensch" will therefore not allow for transcendence, revealing his desire of being "sicut-deus" in opposition to being "Geschöpf".<sup>173</sup> It goes with the dismissal of the "immer wieder aus der unbetretbaren Mitte und Grenze des Lebens auf ihn zukommende Wort Gottes" and results in the person him- or herself being the middle.<sup>174</sup> It is then God alone who "könnte ihn auf seine nie aufzuhebende Geschöpflichkeit anreden, und er tut das in Jesus Christus, im Kreuz, in der Kirche."<sup>175</sup> "Der Stamm des Kreuzes wird zum Holze des Lebens, und mitten in der Welt ist nun aufs neue auf dem verfluchten Acker das Leben aufgerichtet; in der Mitte der Welt, am Holz des Kreuzes quillt der Quell des Lebens auf ..."<sup>176</sup> It is in *Schöpfung*

*und Fall*, then, that Bonhoeffer for the first time connects Christ with the center. Already before when discussing the question of the "Anfang" Bonhoeffer refers to Christ arguing "daß wir allein von Christus her um den anfänglichen Menschen wissen können ..." <sup>177</sup> And therefore "als solche, die allein durch Christus leben und Geschichte haben, können wir nicht aus unserer Phantasie um den Anfang wissen, sondern allein aus der neuen Mitte, aus Christus ..." <sup>178</sup> It is in this sense that *Schöpfung und Fall* illustrates Bonhoeffer's growing christological concentration on questions of human identity and sociality. But it also anticipates his later conviction that God has to be found in the center and not at the margins of reality.

It is at the same time important to note how Bonhoeffer argues that the boundary has not shifted, but is still there, where it always was, "in der unbetretbaren Mitte des Baumes des Lebens ..." <sup>179</sup> For since Adam has been driven out of Eden, the boundary is "nicht mehr in der Mitte seines Lebens, sondern sie bedrängt ihn von außen, er muß dauernd gegen sie anrennen, sie steht ihm immer im Weg." <sup>180</sup> Hence, Reuter's observation of a basic shift from the "Grenze am Rand" to the "Grenze in der Mitte" has to be qualified in the sense that according to Bonhoeffer the "Grenze in der Mitte" remains always at the same time the "Grenze am Rand". *Schöpfung und Fall* and its notion of the boundary therefore does not do away with the argument found in *Sanctorum Communio* and *Akt und Sein*, but engages the epistemological problems emerging from the initial emphasis of the "Grenze am Rand". Both the danger of the objectivation of the "I" through the "you" and of the boundary being "eine bloß gesetzte Kategorie" are therefore responded to with the notion of the boundary in the center.

Bonhoeffer's theological distinction between an understanding of the boundary as a gift of grace which sets one free from the imperial self in contrast to an understanding of the boundary as destructive and limiting reflects the continuous struggle of hearing the claim the "other" makes upon us as a call to freedom and genuine sociality. This call to freedom takes on different forms throughout Bonhoeffer's early journeys revolving around the freedom to engage the "other's" historical and cultural particularity, to recognize the limits of one's own categories, intertexts, and catalogue of prejudices and

stereotypes, to move from a purely theological existence to a more practical and active involvement, to see oneself and the world from a perspective other than one's own and to finally to critically re-consider boundary markers of personal, denominational and national identity.

Reuter observes another important implication of moving the boundary from the margin to the center when he argues: "Hatte das Ernstnehmen des konkreten Du als 'Grenze' Bonhoeffer zur ekklesiologischen Einklammerung der Theologie in die empirische Kirche verholfen, so führt die Entdeckung der Grenze als 'Mitte' ... zur schärferen Unterscheidung der Kirche von Jesus Christus ..." <sup>181</sup> This much sharper distinction between Christ and the church represents a first opening for a christological reading of those "Grenzerfahrungen" of Bonhoeffer which are situated outside the realm of the church. His christology lectures, discussed in the next part, will prove to consolidate this new development.

##### 5. "The Other" as Christ the Boundary and Mediator in the Center

According to Feil it is in *Akt und Sein* that Bonhoeffer for the first time discusses another central theological theme: "Es wird nämlich hier [in *Akt und Sein*] ein erstes Mal, wenn auch eher andeutungsweise, die absolute Vermittlung durch Jesus Christus ausgesprochen." <sup>182</sup> While *Sanctorum Communio* still assumes an immediacy before God, Bonhoeffer is then seen to introduce Christ's "Mittlerschaft" when he argues: "Gewissen als Unmittelbarkeitbeziehung zu Gott würde die Selbstbindung Gottes an das mittlerische Wort umgehen und so Christus und die Kirche ausschalten." <sup>183</sup> Feil therefore maintains that in *Akt und Sein* "Jesus Christus nun die Grenze, echtes 'von außen' ist, daß der actus directus auf ihn gerichtet ist und daß er daher der einzige Mittler sowohl zu Gott als auch zum anderen Menschen wie zur Außenwelt ist." <sup>184</sup> Hence, Christ inhabits the "Mitte" in the paradoxical sense "daß sie vermittelt, ohne damit aufzuhören, echte Mitte zu sein." <sup>185</sup> It is in view of theology's "Gebundenheit an das Ereignis der Menschwerdung Gottes in Jesus Christus als des unumgänglichen Mittlers" that Bonhoeffer's theology in *Akt und Sein* anticipates his christology lectures. <sup>186</sup> But *Schöpfung und Fall* and its combination



of Christ and center also prepares us, as we have seen, for what Feil describes as “eine von Christus her mögliche und verwirklichte Verbindung von Mitte und Grenze” in Bonhoeffer’s christology lecture.<sup>187</sup> According to Bethge it is in the christology lecture that Bonhoeffer tried “das bisher Gedachte, Gesagte und Experimentierte ... zusammenzubinden, zu bewähren und auf seinen letzten Grund zu prüfen ...”<sup>188</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s christology lectures<sup>189</sup> continues to struggle with the issue of the boundary by weaving into the theme of encounter the question of identity. His christology is framed by what Pangritz describes as “the ‘question of encounter’ between Christ, the church and the world ...”<sup>190</sup> and expresses itself around the question of the “other’s” identity: “Wer bist Du?” Bonhoeffer distinguishes the latter question from the godless and immanent question of “‘wie’ bist Du möglich?” The question of the “Wer” is, in contrast, the question of transcendence, expresses otherness and emphasizes the reality of a genuine boundary:

Die Frage nach dem “Wer” drückt die Andersartigkeit des anderen aus. Die “Wer-Frage” ist zugleich die Existenzfrage des Fragenden. In der “Wer-Frage” fragt der Frager nach dem ihn begrenzenden Sein. Sollte der Fragende als Antwort hören müssen, daß sein Logos seine Grenze erfährt, so ist der Fragende an die Grenze seiner Existenz gestoßen. Zusammengefaßt: Die Existenzfrage ist die Transzendenzfrage.<sup>191</sup>

The christological question then is the question of encounter which centers around the “Wer-Frage”. Feil hereby observes how Bonhoeffer’s prioritizing of the “Wer-Frage” “eine Akzentuierung auf ein ‘personales Wirklichkeitsverständnis’ deutlich erkennen [läßt] ...”<sup>192</sup> It is by situating the christological question within the sphere of the church that Bonhoeffer is then able to avoid the philosophical “Wie-Frage” and how the truth of revelation can be conceived.<sup>193</sup> Bonhoeffer applies the same distinction to encounter in general and identifies the constant danger of the “Wie-Frage” being masked as the “Wer-Frage”: “In unserer täglichen Sprache ist die Frage: ‘Wer bist Du’ wohl vorhanden. Aber sie ist jeweils auflösbar in die ‘Wie-Frage’. Sage mir, *wie* Du bist, sage mir, *wie* Du denkst, so will ich sagen, wer Du bist.”<sup>194</sup> The reason given for the pervasive power of the “Wie-Frage” is “unsere Fesselung an unsere eigene Autorität. Es ist das *cor curvum*

in se (Luther)."<sup>195</sup> In contrast the "Wer-Frage" expresses a desire for genuine encounter, for it is "die Frage nach dem anderen Menschen, dem anderen Sein, der anderen Autorität. Sie ist die Frage der Liebe zum Nächsten."<sup>196</sup> And yet, according to Bonhoeffer, critical thinking is continuously faced with the dilemma of the "cor curvum in se". For it is "Die letzte Frage des kritischen Denkens ..., daß sie nach dem *Wer* fragen muß, aber nicht *kann*."<sup>197</sup> The mystery of the "Wer" remains concealed. And therefore the christological question can only be asked "wo sich der Gefragte selbst vorher schon offenbart hat ..."<sup>198</sup> It is hence only in the sphere of the church that the "Wer-Frage" can be posed, because "nach dem *Wer* kann nur gefragt werden unter der Voraussetzung der bereits vorher geschehenen Antwort."<sup>199</sup> Bonhoeffer's "Grenzerfahrungen" can be read as genuine encounters which confront him with the "Wer-Frage" and thereby emphasize difference and otherness. This once again comes out most clearly in Bonhoeffer's hermeneutical reflections unfolded in the essay "Protestantismus ohne Reformation". For there the "Wer-Frage" translates into the question of "was Gott an und mit seiner Kirche und in Amerika tut" disclosing the decisive "surplus" Bonhoeffer refers to as "Rest".<sup>200</sup> This approach is contrasted with traditional attempts of explaining the difference of a foreign church in terms of geographical, historical and socio-political factors, which Bonhoeffer identifies as major obstacles for genuine encounter and clearly resonate with his definition of the "Wie-Frage".

Given the reality of Christ being present as word and sacrament in the church Bonhoeffer now more specifically asks: "Kraft welcher Personstruktur ist Christus der Kirche gegenwärtig?"<sup>201</sup> His response is: "Die 'Pro-me-Struktur' ist es. Das Sein der Person Christi ist wesenhaft Bezogenheit auf mich. Sein Christus-Sein ist sein 'Pro-me-Sein'."<sup>202</sup> It is within the "Pro-me-Struktur" that Bonhoeffer then supplements the "Wer-Frage" with the important question of the "Wo-Struktur" which is: "Wo steht er [Christus]?"<sup>203</sup> The answer given brings together both the theme of the boundary and the center. Christ is described as being "Für mich, an meiner Stelle, wo ich stehen sollte."<sup>204</sup> And in standing where I cannot stand, he stands "an der Grenze meiner Existenz und doch an meiner Stelle."<sup>205</sup> The "I" is hereby seen to be separated "durch eine von mir unüberschreitbare Grenze von dem Ich, das ich sein soll ..."<sup>206</sup> In other words, "Die Grenze liegt zwischen

meinem alten und neuen Ich, also in der Mitte zwischen mir und mir.”<sup>207</sup> In this sense Christ as the boundary is at the same time the “mir wiedergefundene Mitte. Als Grenze kann die Grenze nur vom Jenseits der Grenze aus gesehen werden.”<sup>208</sup> The important thing is therefore, “daß der Mensch, indem er seine Grenze in Christus erkennt, in dieser Grenze zugleich seine neue Mitte wiedergefunden sieht.”<sup>209</sup> In returning from the “where question” to the “who question” Bonhoeffer concludes: “Christus ist als der pro me Daseiende der Mittler. Das ist sein Wesen und seine Existenzweise.”<sup>210</sup>

Bonhoeffer then continues to unfold Christ’s “In-der-Mitte-Sein” in view of him being “die Mitte der Existenz, Geschichte und Natur ...”<sup>211</sup> Christ is in this sense both “zeitlich und räumlich in der Mitte”<sup>212</sup> and as the “Mittler der unter der Knechtung stehenden Schöpfung ... die Erfüllung dieses Gesetzes, die Befreiung aus dieser Knechtschaft für den ganzen Menschen.”<sup>213</sup> Feil observes how Bonhoeffer thus avoids “eine personalistische Engführung.”<sup>214</sup> For Christ as both “Mitte” and “Mittler” is “das Ende der alten, der gefallenen, und der Anfang der neuen Welt Gottes.”<sup>215</sup> The combination of Christ’s role as both “Mitte” and “Mittler” therefore illustrates, according to Feil, that “indem er [Christus] vermittelt, ist er die Mitte; indem er die Mitte ist, vermittelt er.”<sup>216</sup> Summing up the whole development Feil then concludes: “Jesus Christus ist pro me, pro nobis in Wort, Sakrament und Gemeinde gegenwärtig als der Geschichtliche und erweist sich darin als *Mitte* der Existenz, der Geschichte und der Natur und als *Mittler*, der an unserer Stelle steht.”<sup>217</sup> Both Christ’s role as boundary and mediator and his identification with the center prove to provide an important christological interpretation for the boundary experiences Bonhoeffer made during his early travels. The importance Bonhoeffer attributes to Christ as mediator resonates well with the significant role his foreign companions or close friends played as mediators between himself and the cultural “other”.

The acknowledgement of Christ as the center of all human existence, history and the world offers a sound theological rationale for breaking open his ecclesiological bracket and for putting Christ in the center of all human encounters. This encourages a christological reading of the “surplus” and the “enunciative boundaries” beyond the

boundaries of the church. It also means that one should move with Bonhoeffer beyond Young's position that argues "That whether one sees, and really sees, the Other before reflecting on the meaning of that first sighting depends upon whether one has seen Christ."<sup>218</sup> For it is in the claim the "other" is able to make upon myself that I begin to really see the "other" as Christ the boundary in the center. This theological opening could already be detected, as we have discussed before, in his longing to find the visible "Gestalt" of Christ in India. It supports a reading of his turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" as including the full spectrum of interpretations of reality, extending as a continuum from factual reality to Christ as the ultimate "real".

Bonhoeffer's theological concern of moving Christ the "real" to the center of all human encounters in a fascinating way echoes his response to the discovery of "real" human beings seeking help at the "Hilfsverein" in Barcelona. For even though these people come from outside the church, their "realness" and authenticity move them close to the center of God's grace, questioning traditional boundaries of "us" and "them". This shift from the margin to the center sparked off by a genuine "Grenzerfahrung" and experience of "Wirklichkeitsnähe" enables us to earth Bonhoeffer's understanding of Christ as boundary and center in the concrete reality of human encounters and takes us beyond Bonhoeffer's initial ecclesiological concentration. Already in Barcelona Bonhoeffer showed great determination to move Christ back into the center, thus establishing God's claim on the whole of reality. This determination implied a radical critique of the kind of provincialism, privatization of faith and compartementalization of reality Bonhoeffer experienced in the German diaspora community. Thus Bonhoeffer's "who", "how" and "where" questions help us to formulate a theologically informed response to postcolonial practices and theories of encounter. They move the boundaries we experience into the center of our lives, history and world, not unlike the way the Afro-American spirituals, which Bonhoeffer so much treasured, record "a difficult and highly complex means of working one's way back into history."<sup>219</sup>

### *The Notion of the Mystery*

The different aspects of Bonhoeffer's "theological geography" beautifully come together in what Feil maintains is both the starting point and the "Leitmotiv" of Bonhoeffer's theology: the notion of "Geheimnis".<sup>220</sup> It underlies Bonhoeffer's critique of idealism's "Geheimnislosigkeit" in *Sanctorum Communio* and the distinction between *actus directus* and *actus reflexus* in *Akt und Sein*.<sup>221</sup> Bonhoeffer's notion of "Geheimnis" especially illustrates the centrality of the notion of boundary and center in view of the christological concentration sketched above. Its particular significance for my thesis comes out most clearly in a sermon preached in England in 1934. The whole sermon revolves around the notion of the mystery and employs notions of home and away, dwelling and travel, and distance and closeness, picturing human existence as a journey – in both literal and a metaphorical sense – into the mystery of all life.

Bonhoeffer begins by stating that "Die Geheimnislosigkeit unseres modernen Lebens ... unser Verfall und unsere Armut [ist]."<sup>222</sup> It is the child within us that is seen to show respect for the mystery. In fact the child is attributed a particular sensitivity to the mystery: "Darum haben die Kinder so offene, erwachende Augen, weil sie wissen, daß sie umgeben sind vom Geheimnis. Sie sind mit dieser Welt noch nicht fertig geworden, sie wissen sich noch nicht so durchzuschlagen und die Geheimnisse zu umgehen, wie wir es wissen."<sup>223</sup> This explanation illustrates Bonhoeffer's ongoing exploration of the theme of the child in theology and reminds us of how he discovered in Barcelona that the Gospel needs to be told like a fairy tale from faraway to children. His theological critique of idealism's "Geheimnislosigkeit" is hence mirrored in a homiletic approach which emphasizes the need to recover foreignness and otherness. Adults, in contrast, are portrayed as being opposed to the mystery. The rationale given for this opposition interprets the desire to destroy the mystery in terms of the hatred for the boundary in the center of our being: "Wir zerstören das Geheimnis, weil wir spüren, daß wir hier an eine Grenze unseres Seins geraten ..."<sup>224</sup> The motivation for such destructive aversion is located in our desire "über alles verfügen und Herr sein wollen ..."<sup>225</sup> But the mystery resists such domination and assimilation.<sup>226</sup> This resistance makes the mystery "unheimlich, weil wir nicht bei ihm *daheim* sind, weil es von einem anderen 'Daheimsein' redet als dem unseren."<sup>227</sup> In other words, the experience of the mystery as

persistent boundary defies practices of accommodation, questions our understanding of “home” and instead emphasizes our dis-connectedness from “home”. At the same time it inscribes a new homing desire which envisions our life as pilgrimage. It recalls the subtext of “home” integral to the diasporic condition Bonhoeffer experienced in Barcelona portraying the global condition of culture as a site of travel and suggesting homelessness as the basic *conditio humana*.

Bonhoeffer then continues to describe how to live “geheimnislos” signifies, “von dem Geheimnis in unserem eigenen Leben, von dem Geheimnis des anderen Menschen, von dem Geheimnis der Welt nichts wissen, heißt, an den Verborgenen unser selbst, des anderen Menschen und der Welt vorüber gehen ...”<sup>228</sup> It reiterates the dilemma of idealism’s knowing “I”, which destroys the mystery by transgressing the boundary which is both at the center and the margin. To live “geheimnislos”, Bonhoeffer then adds, “heißt, an der Oberfläche bleiben, heißt, die Welt nur so weit ernstnehmen, als sie verrechnet und ausgenutzt werden kann, hinter die Welt des Rechnens und des Nutzens nicht zurückgehen.”<sup>229</sup> In such a world, where the “other” is measured merely in terms of marketability and profit, domination and exploitation are ripe. Such domination entails the transgression and ultimately the destruction of the boundary which is supposed to protect the mystery that characterizes not only our own lives, but the lives of others and the nature of this world. The “other” is hereby only the projected “other” constructed as “Ergänzung”, “Gegenbild” or “Resonanzboden des Eigenen”, imposing deadening sameness and a totalizing system.

And yet, “*Geheimnis heißt nun aber nicht einfach, etwas nicht wissen.*”<sup>230</sup> The reason for this is explained in terms of the following paradox:

Nicht der fernste Stern ist das größte Geheimnis, sondern im Gegenteil je näher uns etwas kommt, je besser wir etwas wissen, desto geheimnisvoller wird es uns. Nicht der fernste Mensch ist uns das größte Geheimnis, sondern gerade der nächste. Und sein Geheimnis wird uns dadurch nicht geringer, daß wir immer mehr von ihm wissen; sondern in seiner Nähe wird er uns immer geheimnisvoller.<sup>231</sup>

- <sup>6</sup> James Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity. Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 163.
- <sup>7</sup> Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity. Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*, 163.
- <sup>8</sup> Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity. Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*, 163-64.
- <sup>9</sup> Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity. Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*, 164.
- <sup>10</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, XVI-XVII.
- <sup>11</sup> Dieter Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 9.
- <sup>12</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 9. Lamping hereby refers only to literature that writes about the border, which might originate in border regions, but can certainly not be limited to them.
- <sup>13</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 10.
- <sup>14</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 11.
- <sup>15</sup> Lamping sketches the following short history of German border experiences: "Der Deutsch-Französische Krieg 1870/71 blieb jedoch der letzte Waffengang, der mit einem Zugewinn an Land endete. Nicht nur der Friedens-Vertrag von Versailles brachte für das Deutsche Reich im Westen wie im Osten Gebietsverluste. Auch die Grenz-Erweiterungen, zu denen der 2. Weltkrieg anfangs führte, hatten nicht lange Bestand. Deutschland verlor am Ende nicht nur einen erheblichen Teil seines Territoriums, vor allem im Osten. Der Kalte Krieg zog auch die deutsche Teilung nach sich, die Entstehung der deutsch-deutschen Grenze, deren Symbol die Berliner Mauer wurde. Zusammen mit der Oder-Neiße-Linie bildete die neue innerdeutsche Grenze über Jahrzehnte hinweg den Gegenstand erbitterter außen- und innenpolitischer Auseinandersetzungen, die erst mit der Maueröffnung und der Anerkennung der Grenze zu Polen einen Abschluß fanden." Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 11.
- <sup>16</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 11.
- <sup>17</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 11.
- <sup>18</sup> Eberhard Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology," *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register* LI, no. Number 2 (February 1961): 6, An Extension Service Bulletin Edited for Our Alumni and the Congregational Christian Ministers of the Middle West.
- <sup>19</sup> Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology," 6.
- <sup>20</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 12.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. in particular his travel notes on crossing into Italy and North Africa.
- <sup>22</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 12.
- <sup>23</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 13.
- <sup>24</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 13.
- <sup>25</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 14.
- <sup>26</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 14.
- <sup>27</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 14-15.
- <sup>28</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 15.
- <sup>29</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 15.
- <sup>30</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 15.
- <sup>31</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 15.
- <sup>32</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 15.
- <sup>33</sup> Lamping, *Über Grenzen. Eine Literarische Topographie*, 15.
- <sup>34</sup> Ruth Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* XXXI, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 262.
- <sup>35</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 264.
- <sup>36</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 265.
- <sup>37</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262.
- <sup>38</sup> Michael Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 4.
- <sup>39</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 4.

- <sup>40</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>41</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 592-93.
- <sup>42</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans-Richard Reuter, vol. 2 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1988), 81.
- <sup>43</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 252.
- <sup>44</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 81.
- <sup>45</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>46</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 257.
- <sup>47</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 257.
- <sup>48</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 238.
- <sup>49</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 255.
- <sup>50</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 255.
- <sup>51</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 255.
- <sup>52</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 82.
- <sup>53</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.
- <sup>54</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.
- <sup>55</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.
- <sup>56</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.
- <sup>57</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.
- <sup>58</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 264. Weinrich explains: "Er [Bonhoeffer] benutzt den Idealismus bewußt als ein nur begrenzt wirksames Instrumentarium, mit dem sich allgemeingültige Aussagen über eine nur individuell erfahrbare Wirklichkeit machen lassen. Dadurch entsteht ein Wechselverhältnis zwischen dem Akt des Individuums und dem Sein der Gemeinschaft. Dieses Wechselverhältnis ist für den Sprachraum der Kirche in der Akt-Sein-Synthese 'Christus als Gemeinde existierend' präfiguriert und inhaltlich fixiert." (Weinrich 1980: 264)
- <sup>59</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 264.
- <sup>60</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Pfeifer, vol. 9 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1986), 88.
- <sup>61</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 102.
- <sup>62</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 354-55.
- <sup>63</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium: 1918-1927*, 583.
- <sup>64</sup> See chapter "America".
- <sup>65</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 264. Weinrich recognizes Bonhoeffer's role as "Vermittlungstheologe": "Bonhoeffer fragt einerseits nach der konkreten Struktur der Kirche, ohne andererseits das von der 'dialektischen Theologie' wieder aufgenommene reformatorische Erbe der Herauslösung des Evangeliums aus der weltlichen Vereinnahmung verletzen zu wollen. Er möchte theologisch sowohl vor einer Verselbständigung der



Theologie von der empirischen Wirklichkeit als auch vor einer soziologischen Begründung der Kirche warnen." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 216.

<sup>66</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 25.

<sup>67</sup> See literature review.

<sup>68</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 26.

<sup>69</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 26.

<sup>71</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 26.

<sup>72</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 27.

<sup>74</sup> Bonhoeffer follows Hegel in using the concept of Geist to understand "person" as an individual and a corporate concept. Green explains how for Bonhoeffer "'Person' is not a concept limited only to individuals. It is rather a model, which, while first expounded in terms of individuals in the relationship of I and thou, is fundamental to his interpretation of corporate life. A social community – family, people, nation, church – and its 'objective Geist,' therefore, is considered as a 'collective person.'" Clifford Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1972), 37.

<sup>75</sup> "On the basis of the subject-object relationship, the other person never really attains the status of an independent subject. By definition the relationship of knowing does not bring the knowing subject into the social sphere; knowing does not involve the whole being of the knower as person. Moreover, in the relationship of knowing, any 'resistance' encountered in the object can be overcome by the powers of the knowing subject." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 32.

<sup>76</sup> Charles Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Promise of His Theology* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 71.

<sup>77</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 31.

<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 26.

<sup>79</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 27-28.

<sup>80</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 29.

<sup>81</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 40.

<sup>82</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 29.

<sup>83</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 29.

<sup>84</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 31.

<sup>85</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 32.

<sup>86</sup> John De Gruchy, "Sanctorum Communio and the Ethics of Free Responsibility. Reflections on Bonhoeffer's Ecclesiology and Ethics," Cape Town, 2000, 5.

<sup>87</sup> John De Gruchy, ed, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Witness to Jesus Christ, The Making of Modern Theology*, vol. 4 (San Francisco: Collins, 1988), 5.

<sup>88</sup> De Gruchy, "Sanctorum Communio and the Ethics of Free Responsibility. Reflections on Bonhoeffer's Ecclesiology and Ethics," 5.

<sup>89</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 33.

<sup>90</sup> De Gruchy, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Witness to Jesus Christ*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 29.

<sup>92</sup> Gordon E. Michalson, JR, "Cartesianism," in *Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Alister McGrath (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 70.

<sup>93</sup> Michalson, "Cartesianism," 70.

<sup>94</sup> Josiah Ulysses Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 53.

<sup>95</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 53.

<sup>96</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 53-54.

<sup>97</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 55.

<sup>98</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 1 61.

<sup>99</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 165.

<sup>100</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 162.

- <sup>101</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 162.
- <sup>102</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 162.
- <sup>103</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 163.
- <sup>104</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 163.
- <sup>105</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 164.
- <sup>106</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 164.
- <sup>107</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 2.
- <sup>108</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 2.
- <sup>109</sup> See Bonhoeffer's hermeneutical reflections on the difficulty of interpreting art in the conclusion of my chapter on "Classic and Catholic Rome".
- <sup>110</sup> De Gruchy, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Witness to Jesus Christ*, 8.
- <sup>111</sup> De Gruchy, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Witness to Jesus Christ*, 10.
- <sup>112</sup> Ernst Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 4., Durchges. und Durch ein 2. Nachwort Ergänzte Aufl. (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 149.
- <sup>113</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 149-50.
- <sup>114</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 109.
- <sup>115</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 111.
- <sup>116</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 124.
- <sup>117</sup> Cf. Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 125.
- <sup>118</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 124.
- <sup>119</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 124.
- <sup>120</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 125.
- <sup>121</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 155.
- <sup>122</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 155.
- <sup>123</sup> The editors of Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*. explain in view of the *actus directus*: "Der Begriff des 'actus directus' (im Unterschied zum 'actus reflectus') ist altprotestantisch und wurde B[onhoeffer] nahegebracht durch F. Delitzsch, System der biblischen Psychologie; vgl. bes. 297f: 'Die durch das Wort genannten und verheißenen Vorgänge (sc. die Wiedergeburt) selbst geschehen an uns in der Tiefe des Unbewußtseins, und nur dann und wann fallen Reflexe in unser Bewußtsein.' B[onhoeffer] schreibt dazu: 'An die Stelle der psychologischen Deutung muß hier natürlich eine theologische treten.'"
- <sup>124</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 156.
- <sup>125</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 72.
- <sup>126</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 73. Young emphasizes: "Bonhoeffer is clear about the distinction, for the cart does not pull the horse. Being comes first. Only after we are here, on this earth, do we have cause to respond to something or someone, and to make use of hindsight." Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 73.
- <sup>127</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 73.
- <sup>128</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>129</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 150.
- <sup>130</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 150.
- <sup>131</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 150-51. Feil then continues to unfold the emphasis of the historical dimension implied in this shift from God to Christ. Cf. Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 151.
- <sup>132</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>133</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>134</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>135</sup> See conclusion of my chapter on "Classic and Catholic Rome".
- <sup>136</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>137</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 75-76.
- <sup>138</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 76.
- <sup>139</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 82.
- <sup>140</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 183. Hans-Richard Reuter provides a chronological list of key passages.
- <sup>141</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 86.
- <sup>142</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 87.

<sup>143</sup> According to the editors of *Schöpfung und Fall*, Martin Rüter and Ilse Tödt, "die Mitte" has to be understood not so much as "ein Mittleres auf einer Geraden", but rather as the "Mittelpunkt eines Kreises oder vielmehr ... die Zusammenfassung aller Orientierungen im Raum in einem Punkt." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Martin Rüter and Ilse Tödt, vol. 3 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1989), 154-55. I have therefore chosen to translate the German "Mitte" as center.

<sup>144</sup> Reuter in: Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 181-82.

<sup>145</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 182.

<sup>146</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 182.

<sup>147</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 182. Reuter refers to Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 83.

<sup>148</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 182.

<sup>149</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 182.

<sup>150</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 75-87.

<sup>151</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 80-81.

<sup>152</sup> Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 1967, 8 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 263.

<sup>153</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 263.

<sup>154</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 81.

<sup>155</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 81.

<sup>156</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 81.

<sup>157</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 58.

<sup>158</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 59.

<sup>159</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 59.

<sup>160</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 59.

<sup>161</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 59.

<sup>162</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 59.

<sup>163</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 92.

<sup>164</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 92.

<sup>165</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 92.

<sup>166</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 92.

<sup>167</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 92. Bonhoeffer states: "In diesem gemeinsamen Tragen der Grenze von den beiden ersten Menschen, in der Gemeinschaft bewährt sich der Charakter dieser Gemeinschaft als Kirche." Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 2.

<sup>168</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 93.

<sup>169</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 115.

<sup>170</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 115.

<sup>171</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 108.

<sup>172</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 108.

<sup>173</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 108.

<sup>174</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 108.

<sup>175</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 108.

<sup>176</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 135.

<sup>177</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 58.

<sup>178</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 87.

<sup>179</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 133.

<sup>180</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 133-34.

<sup>181</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 182.

<sup>182</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 154.

<sup>183</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 140.

<sup>184</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 155.

<sup>185</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 156.

<sup>186</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 156.

<sup>187</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 170.

<sup>188</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 265.

- <sup>189</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Carsten Nicolaisen and Ernst-Albrecht Scharffenorth, vol. 12 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1997), 279-348.
- <sup>190</sup> Andreas Pangritz, "Who is Jesus Christ, for Us, Today?" in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. John W. De Gruchy, Cambridge Companions To Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 136.
- <sup>191</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>192</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 176, footnote 72.
- <sup>193</sup> Pangritz, "Who is Jesus Christ, for Us, Today?" 117.
- <sup>194</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>195</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>196</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>197</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>198</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>199</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 283.
- <sup>200</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Sammelvikare 1937-1940*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Dirk Schulz, vol. 15 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 432.
- <sup>201</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 295.
- <sup>202</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 295. Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 307. Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306. Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 311.
- <sup>203</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>204</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>205</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>206</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>207</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>208</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>209</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 307.
- <sup>210</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 307.
- <sup>211</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 307.
- <sup>212</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 306.
- <sup>213</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 311.
- <sup>214</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 176, footnote 72.
- <sup>215</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932-1933*, 311.
- <sup>216</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 176.
- <sup>217</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 175-76.
- <sup>218</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 93.
- <sup>219</sup> Kimberly Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," *Semeia* 75 (1996): 109. Connor hereby emphasizes: "How one reinserts oneself back into history is as important as the history one wishes to re-write; thus the postcolonial analytical process proposed by the spirituals is directed by 'the African heritage' of call and response. It proceeds by means of a dialogical process to initiate and perpetuate the necessary correction of colonialism's legacy of monologically narrated history." Rae Connor, "Everybody Talking About Heaven Ain't Going There: The Biblical Call for Justice and the Postcolonial Response of the Spirituals," 109.
- <sup>220</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 28. The editors of *Akt und Sein* hereby explain: "Während Bonhoeffer in seiner Theologie des Geheimnisses die menschlichen Denkformen zum Schutz des Mysteriums einsetzen will, sieht er Barth primär damit beschäftigt, in seiner Theologie der Offenbarung den menschlichen Logos zum Moment der Selbstexplikation des göttlichen Logos zu machen, um damit doch noch die Ansprüche des Reflexionszeitalters zu befriedigen. Theologie soll an das göttliche Geheimnis als die sich entziehende Mitte der Wirklichkeit heranzuführen, ohne seine ewig gegebene Wahrheit logifizierend auszuplaudern – vor dieser Grunddifferenz zwischen Bonhoeffer und Barth nimmt sich, wie immer man sie bewerten mag, das späte Verdikt über Barths 'Offenbarungspositivismus' alles andere als überraschend aus." Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein*, 184.
- <sup>221</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 28-29.
- <sup>222</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Goedeking, Martin Heimbucher and Hans-Walter Schleicher, vol. 13 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 359.

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<sup>223</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 359-60.

<sup>224</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>225</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>226</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>227</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>228</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>229</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>230</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

<sup>231</sup> Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360. Feil points out: "Zwei Grundmotive von WE [Widerstand und Ergebung] klingen hier an: die Ablehnung der 'platten und banalen Diesseitigkeit' ..., und die Auffassung, daß das Jenseitige (bzw. die Transzendenz) 'nicht das unendlich Ferne, sondern das Nächste' ist ...." Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, 360.

## **Appendix: Literature Survey on the Turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen"**

The scholarly debate on Bonhoeffer's turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" offers a spectrum of interpretations which approach the phrase from different perspectives: biographical, existential, philosophical, theological, and cultural. Bonhoeffer himself places the turning in the context of his early travels and the influence of his father. But since the remark is made in one of his prison letters toward the end of his life, it is necessary to include those studies which deal with his life-long endeavour of understanding reality in its factual and theological sense and which consider the theme of reality as the hermeneutical key to Bonhoeffer's life and thought. Each reading offers an important foil for our own analysis, highlighting the centrality of the theme of reality in Bonhoeffer's life and thought, introducing us to the various layers of understanding his complex notion of reality, and finally pointing out important connections and developments within his writings. This overview enables us to situate our analysis within the wider field of Bonhoeffer studies and to carve out the particular contribution our analysis is able to make.

We begin by looking at what we identified as the most important thematic-systematic approaches to Bonhoeffer's understanding of reality. According to Heinrich Ott's *Reality & Faith* Bonhoeffer was "the first to sense with such clarity and such passion the hidden fundamental question of our era which troubles us, the question difficult to formulate, perhaps up to now not formulated at all, yet always unavoidably and disturbingly there and concerning us as our destiny, *the question of reality*."<sup>1</sup> Ott's central thesis is that the major theme of Bonhoeffer's thought is constituted by christological ontology. Indeed, his analysis of both faith and reality in Bonhoeffer's thinking maintains that "his problem in all parts of his thought is reality." We are said to find in it "the invisible law of the inner unity of his development, even if it is only occasionally explicitly treated."<sup>2</sup> Proceeding from this assumption of continuity in Bonhoeffer's thought, Ott negates any decisive changes in Bonhoeffer's theological development.

Chronologically moving forward and backward in Bonhoeffer's writings, Ott identifies Bonhoeffer's *Ethik* (1939-1944) and the Christology lectures (1933) as crucial texts for an understanding of his concept of reality. Bonhoeffer's christology is interpreted as incarnational ontology and seen to be the essential key for unfolding his understanding of reality. Commenting on Bonhoeffer's equation of Christ with reality Ott argues that "This view of Christ as the truly real upholding all reality is maintained throughout his work, it may be with varying nuances, but without any material break."<sup>3</sup> According to Ott the implication is that Christ "is not only real, that he is not only one reality beside others, *but that he is that reality itself, which or who is the truly real in all that is real*. Wherever we come up against reality, it can be Christ encountering us unawares. *This* is what Jesus Christ is for us. This is the answer to the question about 'Who he is'."<sup>4</sup> Ott points out

that what Bonhoeffer sought was to structure the ontology of all that is real as Christology, or in other words, to develop Christology as the ontology of all that is real. All *concepts* of reality which do not take account of Christ are abstraction; that does not mean simply that they would be false, but that they do not express the whole, final and intrinsic nature of reality. They may have their own limited correctness; they may on occasion in certain respects express appropriately in words the reality of the real. We could think for example of philosophical concepts of reality, or of ontological concepts orientated towards scientific knowledge of phenomena of the world. But there is lacking in them the final adequacy and concreteness."<sup>5</sup>

Ott then illustrates how it is "in the question of ethics, in responsible existence, in the realm of the existentialist question, 'What am I to do?', that understanding thus dawns upon Bonhoeffer that God is the true and final reality in all realities ..."<sup>6</sup> God is hence spoken of "as the final reality to which the responsible existence of the Christian has to surrender itself ..."<sup>7</sup> The immanence of God in the ethical situation is then understood in the sense of reconciliation: "The final reality of all things is their reconciliation in the person and work of Jesus Christ."<sup>8</sup> The real is therefore not simply the factual and empirically verifiable, which are abstractions from the fullness of the real: "This fullness, properly speaking, is God, the reconciliation of the world in him, his reconciling presence. But this must not remain an empty assertion, it must be

an ontological structure, capable of explanation in terms of the reality of what is real in the world, though not to be derived from it alone.”<sup>9</sup> But, as Ott stresses, according to Bonhoeffer “we only receive insight into this final fullness ‘ethically’, and not at all theoretically, that is to say, we receive it in the adventure of responsibility.”<sup>10</sup> And yet Bonhoeffer is described as not limiting the relevance of the reality of God only to the ethical context. Instead no reality is seen to lie outside the reality in Christ, because ontological Christology makes a total claim upon the whole of reality. And therefore “Christ, as the foundation which supports and establishes reality, is not to be thought of as only in one particular realm of ‘ethical’ reality ...”<sup>11</sup> This is also seen to be expressed in the Christology lectures, where Bonhoeffer does not yet use the keyword “reality”, but the line of thought is already the same. For there “Christ is thought of as the centre of human existence, as the centre of history, and finally as the centre of nature also.”<sup>12</sup> Discussing the concepts of “reality and realization” and “formation and conformation”, which are in mutual correspondence, Ott conveys Bonhoeffer’s understanding of the basic problem of ethics as participation in reality:

What it does mean is that the horizon of Christian ethics dare not be limited to such a superficial view of Christian responsibility, but that here more than anywhere else something happens which is the true ethical event, something founded on the reality of Christian existence, namely that surrender of oneself to the true reality of God, that conformation with the form of Jesus Christ the truly real. This is the ethical event, as seen in the true depths of its being.”<sup>13</sup>

In this sense “Conformation means being drawn into the reality and form of Jesus Christ, who is the Incarnate, Crucified and Risen.”<sup>14</sup> As a consequence “Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection are structural components of his person, but equally components of his being for others, his being for the world, and therefore components of such an ‘openness’ that all reality, and especially all real human being, can participate in it.”<sup>15</sup> These, then, are the three moments of conformation with Christ.

Ott continues to identify the particular structures of the reality of Christ. Discussing *Sanctorum Communio* Ott observes that “early experiences and in particular his experience of Rome would have played an important role”<sup>16</sup> in his special interest in



the Church. While an inquiry into the influence of Bonhoeffer's life experiences is encouraged, Ott's focus is to detect the continuities between Bonhoeffer's early and late writings. And yet, in highlighting "the background in experience of Bonhoeffer's thought of *communio*" Ott explores how, in the loneliness of his cell, Bonhoeffer expressed the importance of "solidarity with his fellowmen, with his neighbours ..." <sup>17</sup> This way of experiencing human relations is seen to represent "a constant thread which runs through Bonhoeffer's thought ..." <sup>18</sup> It is perceived to be "*a characteristic of his existential experience itself*, and therefore an essential structural component of his picture of humanity as he experienced it." <sup>19</sup> Reaching out beyond individual existence is understood to belong to the reality of each human being: "I am not only associated with others and co-operating with them, not merely brought together secondarily into some relation with them. I am unified with them in a much more original way. They are part of myself." <sup>20</sup> This genuine solidarity between human beings, this breaking with the normal individualistic understanding of human beings is according to Ott "not formulated by Bonhoeffer as a metaphor, but experienced as something structural, something essential." <sup>21</sup> In *Akt und Sein* Bonhoeffer is then seen to demarcate his position "against defining revelation either as pure activism, as being an event on each separate occasion, or as having the nature of pure static being, and therefore being at our disposal." <sup>22</sup> Discussing transcendental and ontological approaches to epistemology Bonhoeffer attempts to grasp the concrete reality of revelation. It is his "theologico-sociological" category that is believed to lead beyond these two false alternatives, "establishing both the *extra me* of the *kerygma* and its continuity." <sup>23</sup> The category of the collective person and the concept of the community as the collective person become the key to imagining this third option.

Ott then moves on to the *Ethik*, including discussions on *Widerstand and Ergebung* to once again look at "the ethical problem" as Bonhoeffer's starting-point and to consider further structures by which Christ gives content and reality to ethical action. Interestingly, in discussing reality not only as Bonhoeffer's but also as our own theme, Ott argues that "The basic problem, 'reality', is in the theological realm identical with the problem of credibility, the believable articulation of the Gospel." <sup>24</sup> The connection between the question of reality and credibility in Bonhoeffer's own thought is seen to be especially evident in his letter to Helmut Rössler on 18 October, 1931. As we will

see in our chapter on *Dreaming India* the letter reflects a very personal confession made about his struggle with the invisibility of God in the West and the longing to find Christ in India. Bonhoeffer's longing for India is clarified as a longing for the reality of God, for the experience of God. Ott, of course, maintains that "the words spoken in some strong emotion" are not at all "born out of some mood of the moment",<sup>25</sup> but characteristic of Bonhoeffer's life-long wrestling with the problem of reality.<sup>26</sup> Not surprisingly then, Ott reads Bonhoeffer's theme of hiddenness in the prison letters, as suggesting that "there are ways ... of encountering and experiencing Christ apart from the encounter with the kerygma."<sup>27</sup> In other words: "All real and essential experience becomes in this way the experience of Jesus Christ as the real."<sup>28</sup>

Ott's study foregrounds well the centrality of reality in Bonhoeffer's thought and more specifically Bonhoeffer's life-long attempt to structure the ontology of all that is real as Christology. This approach is well illustrated by his constant engagement with and integration of theological, sociological, and philosophical perspectives. Bonhoeffer's "drive towards reality" is, therefore, rightly represented as involving both an exploration of Christ as the only real one and of the factual reality surrounding him. This ambivalence and tension around the notion of reality needs to be kept in mind. In this respect Ott managed to show the strong continuities that exist between Bonhoeffer's early and late writings. But Ott's basic assumption of continuity in Bonhoeffer's thought also led to, as Green has put it, an "undifferentiated conflation of ideas in different stages of Bonhoeffer's work."<sup>29</sup> Ott's synthesizing approach seems to also suggest that Bonhoeffer's ontology was from the beginning christological and in essence always worked with the same understanding of reality. Green therefore rightly questions Ott's assumption that "Christology alone provide[s] the key to interpreting Bonhoeffer's theological development."<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, by choosing a systematic, unhistorical method and insisting on an essential continuity, Ott stresses the continuities at the expense of the discontinuities in Bonhoeffer's thought. This applies especially to the turning of 1932 which according to Ott did not involve any decisive alterations. But why would Bonhoeffer then talk about a turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen"? It is unfortunate that Ott's discussion does not pay any attention to Bonhoeffer's remark, given the importance Bonhoeffer himself attributes to the turning and the role his journeys abroad played in it. For those

encounters illustrate the significance of the ethical situation and as Ott put it, “the adventure of responsibility” for Bonhoeffer’s understanding of reality. In this respect Green’s radical critique of Ott’s failure to consider Bonhoeffer’s anthropology and soteriology while speaking so much about reality is justified. It is, as Green poignantly detects, an irony which “is doubled when this is done in the name of an incarnational Christology!”<sup>31</sup> For Ott “seems more interested in systematizing ontological ‘structures’ and corresponding ‘existentials’ than discovering the concrete and detailed psychological and sociological human dynamics which are the ‘reality’ in which Bonhoeffer’s Christology comes alive.”<sup>32</sup> And yet at one point, when Ott makes the connection between Bonhoeffer’s interest in India and his “drive towards reality”, the unity of Christ as the only real and factual reality is indeed explored in more concrete terms. Unfortunately this journey never materialized and in this sense also remained but an abstract idea. But what it does point us to is another intricate connection Bonhoeffer made between journey and reality, Christ and the cultural “other”. Bonhoeffer’s reflections on India, then, encourage a reading of his actual journeys in the light of Bonhoeffer’s other journey, the journey into a deeper and fuller understanding of reality.

André Dumas’ *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality* represents another influential study suggesting that Bonhoeffer’s theology is a theology of reality.<sup>33</sup> Dumas also introduces Bonhoeffer as a “theologian of reality”. Including Bonhoeffer’s early, and often neglected, writings Dumas stresses the continuities in his theological development and, like Ott identifies “reality” as the key word in all of this. Bonhoeffer’s use of this key word is shown to be nuanced referring to either the empirical world around us or the world as seen through the eyes of faith with Christ at the center. The influence of Hegel on Bonhoeffer’s thought is especially significant in understanding his emphasis on “structure”. Bonhoeffer is perceived to have wrestled with the following basic questions from the very beginning of his work:

... can the God of reality, in the midst of the world, be called an immanent (even if hidden) structure of the everyday empirical world? Can the ontology of the creaturely-existence (*Dasein*) of Jesus Christ be called an “anonymous” ontology of global

reality? Can the christological transcendence of this world be expressed, without reduction, by the transcendence of love of neighbor ...?<sup>34</sup>

As a “theologian of reality” Bonhoeffer is understood to respond to a fundamental problem of Protestant theology. It is diagnosed in the tension between Barth’s emphasis on objective revelation and Bultmann’s existential interpretation.<sup>35</sup> Dumas thereby points us to the following double theological concerns: “... on the one hand really to speak about *God*, against all reductive subjectivism, and on the other hand really to *speak* about him, against all objectification of self-contained supernatural truths.”<sup>36</sup> Bonhoeffer is seen to explore these two poles in an attempt to overcome the impasse. His major concern is “to hold onto the world around him, since God is found in the concrete.”<sup>37</sup> In Bonhoeffer’s view both Barth and Bultmann showed a dangerous lack of realism ignoring the world in its concrete reality.

For “Barth’s preaching of God as the ‘totally Other’ ran the risk of metaphysical dualism by placing God’s claim outside the world, and ontological inconsistency by underestimating the being of God in the church.”<sup>38</sup> From the beginning Bonhoeffer feared “that Barth’s dogmatics (which Bonhoeffer accepted) might end in speculative abstraction because of its lack of verification in reality – an abstraction in which the subject would exert its power of knowing from a unique transcendent standpoint located in a ‘beyond’ that would be normative for everything else. God would be the subject-object from which I could understand the world by detached theological speculation.”<sup>39</sup> Bonhoeffer’s critique suggests the following important interrelationship between theology and philosophy:

Theology’s contribution to philosophy is to use the reality of revelation to break the circle of egocentric understanding, the chief shortcoming of which is the weakness of abstraction, whatever precautions it takes toward better self-understanding and self-limitation. Philosophy’s contribution to theology is to use the reality of the world to break the circle of an over-inclusive affirmation and claim that is the weakness of a ‘positivistic’ supernaturalism, whatever precautions it takes to speak kerygmatically rather than speculatively.<sup>40</sup>

The problem in systematic thought is hence the danger of becoming “so self-contained that reality remains exterior to it and that it thus becomes abstract ...”<sup>41</sup> Bonhoeffer’s concept of reality however safeguards against theology falling into the egocentricity of objective revelation and against philosophy falling into the egocentricity of transcendental reflection: “He [Bonhoeffer] never uses the old liberal word ‘experience,’ which he considers too individualistic and interiorized. It is reality that always obligates theology and philosophy to test themselves by limits they do not control.”<sup>42</sup> It is in this line that Dumas understands Bonhoeffer’s later critique of Barth as displaying a “positivism of revelation”.<sup>43</sup> At the heart of this critique is the silence of reality in the face of the givenness of revelation: “When revelation always understands reality better than reality can understand itself, the influence of reality on theological speech is destroyed by a theological explanation of the whole of reality.”<sup>44</sup>

Bonhoeffer approves of Bultmann’s attempt to speak of God in terms of contemporary reality, appreciating the fact that Bultmann does not stifle the critical questions of liberal theology. Both Barth and Bultmann shared “a love for the nineteenth century, a refusal to engage in any *sacrificium intellectus*, and a fear that dogmatic theology will no longer be heard because of its objectivizing or positivistic tendencies.”<sup>45</sup> But at the same time Bonhoeffer’s opposition to Bultmann is described as arising both out of Bonhoeffer’s Barthianism and out of the specifics of his anti-Barthianism, for he “fears that Barth’s objectivity will turn into speculative positivism, but he fears even more that Bultmann’s existentialism will result in an idealism of possibility rather than reality.”<sup>46</sup> Given Bonhoeffer’s sensitivity to both the reality of the Word and to the reality of language, Dumas emphasizes that Bonhoeffer’s theology was neither transcendental, existential, nor liberal. It should rather be described as structural, for throughout his writings we “find a remarkable continuity in his expression of Christian faith, not as the beyond that is self-authenticating, nor as an encounter that takes place, but as a structuring that combines self-knowledge with self-realization.”<sup>47</sup> Jesus Christ becomes the center and structure of reality: “He is neither beyond the world nor in the depths of being, but at the center of the empirical world, which is no longer understood pragmatically but as having an ontological structure understood in christological terms.”<sup>48</sup> Hegel’s influence is thereby most clearly shown in the way the “analysis of creaturely-existence (*Dasein*) aims at demonstrating its reality by grasping

its hidden and active structure, rather than by opening it to a message that would transform it from beyond itself.”<sup>49</sup> Dumas therefore maintains that Bonhoeffer drew from Hegel the ontology of the everyday world “as the formal model for his christology, ecclesiology and ethics, whereas Barth, ... (and Bultmann even more than Barth), started from the transcendentalism of Kant and Kierkegaard.”<sup>50</sup>

The two key-words in Bonhoeffer’s thought are therefore “structuring (*Gestaltung*) and deputyship (*Stellvertretung*).”<sup>51</sup> The former is called his “formal principle” and already expressed in *Akt und Sein*. It refers to “Jesus Christ ... as the one who structures the world by representing its true reality before God ...”<sup>52</sup> As a consequence, “Jesus Christ is described by a series of non-religious words: he is a structure, a deputy, the one responsible for the world, he who restores their true ‘center’ to all things.”<sup>53</sup> Deputyship, the second key-word, is Bonhoeffer’s “substantive principle”<sup>54</sup> and most clearly expressed in the 1933 Christology lectures. It conveys Jesus Christ as the one who

structures the world at its center because, having been conformed to reality, he becomes responsible for it before God. His responsibility rests upon his deputyship, not in the sense that he replaces man to relieve him of the burden of costly grace, but in the sense that he takes on the selfhood of all men, and invites us in our turn to carry his cross, as an act not of resignation, but of faithfulness in our situation, the acceptance of struggle and responsibility.<sup>55</sup>

The structure of responsible life is defined by four features: “holding ourselves responsible for our fellow human beings (deputyship), acting in a manner conformable to reality (‘correspondence with reality’), accepting guilt and freedom, and taking the risk of concrete decisions.”<sup>56</sup> In this way responsible deputyship fills the structuring of the world in Christ with content: “Structure indicates the place that is never vacated, while deputyship indicates the meaning of what is lived there.”<sup>57</sup> Both principles are then seen to find their expression in the *Ethik*, which Dumas claims Bonhoeffer considered his most important book. The question about the relationship between a theology of the Word and a theology of ontological presence becomes “more apparent, more challenging, more unsettling and more absorbing when Bonhoeffer, in his prison

letters, goes on to speak of the ontological presence in a world visibly without God.”<sup>58</sup> It is the absence of an experience of God in the midst of a world that denies both metaphysics and inwardness which becomes Bonhoeffer’s starting point for a non-religious interpretation of Christianity in a world come of age.

While engaging in a detailed study of Bonhoeffer’s key texts, Dumas also draws a biographical sketch and briefly looks at the personal and political context of his theological development. For Dumas recognizes that “Bonhoeffer’s thought is too closely tied to the events of his life to permit us to discuss his work without some knowledge of those events.”<sup>59</sup> And yet Dumas maintains that “the story of a man’s life does not create his thought ...”<sup>60</sup> Instead, life is only attributed with the power to put theological thinking to the test. It should therefore not surprise us that when discussing Bonhoeffer’s remark about his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”, Dumas only refers to Bonhoeffer’s comment about “the inner continuity” of his life.<sup>61</sup> And yet Dumas’ observations on Bonhoeffer’s experiences in Rome, Barcelona and New York seem to contradict his initial assumption about the relationship of life and thought. For decisive new insights are being attached to these journeys abroad which are seen to have “‘de-parochialized’ him as a churchman and ‘de-nationalized’ him as a German.”<sup>62</sup> Bonhoeffer’s openness to the Catholic position in *Sanctorum Communio* - while not accepting the Catholic tendency to divinize the institution itself - is seen to be influenced by his trip to Rome in 1924: “It was there that he discovered and learned to appreciate the universality of the Roman Catholic Church, its non-sectarianism, its appreciation of culture, its desire to relate its faith to public life, and its stress on the power of the confessional.” In Barcelona he “sought for a unity between his intellectual concerns and the everyday life around him – a unity that is particularly difficult for a student to achieve.”<sup>63</sup> But also “his whole Nordic temperament was challenged by discovering that in Spain the bullfight was the aristocratic mark of an ancient civilization.”<sup>64</sup> In America, on the other hand, he had “the chance to measure the effect of a practical Christianity with a strong communal stress but an uncertain confessional stance. He went through the sudden transition from vigorous theological dispute such as he had known in Europe to a more conciliatory type of Anglo-Saxon discussion.”<sup>65</sup> This transition provided Bonhoeffer with new opportunities of discipleship which anticipate his basic theological concept

of deputyship: "To Bonhoeffer, as a privileged person, America above all represented one of the first occasions in which he could live a life of identification and deputyship, which, as we have already seen, is the basic concept of his christology and ethics."<sup>66</sup> Bonhoeffer's sojourn to America is therefore described as having been an important learning experience, which was deepened during his second trip to America in June and July of 1939.<sup>67</sup>

In his article "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer"<sup>68</sup> Dumas further unfolds another important aspect by exploring the significance of Bonhoeffer's critique of religion for his understanding of reality. Dumas observes that "'Religion' always had a pejorative and painful connotation for Bonhoeffer, deceitful and repulsive at its worst, while ... the word 'reality' represents all that Bonhoeffer believed about God and hoped for man."<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, in characterizing the misdeeds of religion, Dumas begins with referring to a letter of Bonhoeffer from Barcelona where he discusses encounters with "real people" in the midst of the "masquerade of the 'Christian world'".<sup>70</sup> He then continues with Bonhoeffer's presentation of Barth at Union Theological Seminary 1931, where he portrays religion as the category opposed to grace. Dumas then turns to those texts that exhibit Bonhoeffer's search for a nonreligious Christianity found not only in his prison letters but from the beginning of his writings. He interprets "Thy rule is coming. The prayer of the community with regard to the Kingdom of God on earth" from 1932 as "a long and remarkable development of the necessary struggle against the religious escapism of those who become unfaithful to the earth and pass into another world of religion."<sup>71</sup> This struggle represents the counterpart of another struggle against "the pious Christian secularists who have joyously replaced the eschatological cause of God on earth with their own cause of moral religious progress."<sup>72</sup> Being either enemies of the world or enemies of God, both groups, "the seekers of another world (*Hinterweltler*) and the secularists (*Sekularisten*)" are described as religious in character to be judged by the reality of God.<sup>73</sup> In the light of the reality of God both groups remain caught up in their own world. The same "disgust with religion" is apparent in Bonhoeffer's reflections on some of the sermons heard in New York.<sup>74</sup> Dumas therefore proposes the understanding of religion as "unreality" as Bonhoeffer's particular emphasis: "It is a flight out from the confines of earth to a place where is neither God nor man, a



desertion of the earth where God is located along with man. It is a longing for the ideal in a renunciation of reality. It hopes to get something better than what it already has.”<sup>75</sup> As a consequence the human being who adheres to religion “detests reality; he wants either to embellish it or to evacuate it. The good boundaries of the concrete become insupportable barriers to desire. He leaps, he crosses them, and he finds himself alone with himself, having deserted reality and his neighbor, God and the world.”<sup>76</sup>

But religion is not the only contrast to Bonhoeffer’s “love of reality”.<sup>77</sup> He opposes reality to a whole series of words that define “the ineffective and illusory”.<sup>78</sup> Among these words Dumas identifies in addition to “‘religious,’ [also] ‘possible,’ ‘idealist,’ ‘abstract’.”<sup>79</sup> The human being “after” the fall is described by Bonhoeffer as running after “two abstractions, either the ideal and the religious, or the factual and the pragmatic.”<sup>80</sup> The task of conforming to reality is, therefore, a dangerous balancing act which attempts to avoid the two extremes as represented in the two literary characters of Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, who illustrate the danger of both blind submission to thinking in principles and a radical rejection of any principles. It is this background which helps us understand Bonhoeffer’s distinction between the responsible man and the ideologue, that is, between the believer and the religious man.<sup>81</sup> Hence, summing up the decisive antipodes of Bonhoeffer’s thinking Dumas highlights: “Concreteness is opposed to religion, commandment to ideals, obedience to vacillation, the sacramental to the conceptual.”<sup>82</sup> The challenge of conforming to reality consists therefore in doing justice to the unity between the reality of God and the world as “indivisible, polemical, oriented, combative, suffering, and blessed.”<sup>83</sup>

In conclusion Dumas writes: “Bonhoeffer’s love for reality was not an avid realism nor a rigid stoicism. It was the pursuit of the reconciliation of the world in Jesus Christ. This reconciliation in its depths is a tension. It passes through the cross where Jesus Christ conformed totally to the reality of man so that man might become totally conformed to the reality of God, which is the new creation of the world through the resurrection on earth.”<sup>84</sup> Therefore “in Bonhoeffer’s eyes, religious Christianity unrealizes, provincializes, interiorizes, and makes Jesus Christ remote.”<sup>85</sup> In contrast “A nonreligious Christianity realizes, universalizes, and makes Jesus public and

present, at once extraordinary and hidden, to use the two favorite adjectives of *Nachfolge*.”<sup>86</sup> These paradoxical affirmations of Bonhoeffer can sometimes engender misunderstandings: “Some people believe that nonreligious Christianity would end up in the muteness of faith; others believe that conformity to reality opens into an unconditional realism.”<sup>87</sup> And yet “Bonhoeffer’s life and work are living refutations of both of these erroneous conclusions.”<sup>88</sup>

Dumas’ argument underlines the “perfect continuity” of Bonhoeffer’s thought. And yet, while Bonhoeffer’s central conviction is said to remain unchanged throughout – “in Jesus Christ God is present in the midst of the reality of the world” – Dumas argues that this truth “is expressed in different ways in different periods of Bonhoeffer’s life, depending on the question, the context and the place.”<sup>89</sup>

The early context is the university, during the period of *Communion of Saints* and *Act and Being*; next comes the Confessing Church, at the time of *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*; and finally, of course, there is the world – ambiguous, penultimate, disguised, abandoned, and yet accountable, already visible in the theoretical presentation of *Ethics*, and even more in its living embodiment in the *Letters and Papers from Prison*. The place where Bonhoeffer sets forth the truth about reality may change, but not its content. God’s ‘space’ is the world and the secret of the world is the hidden presence of God. Jesus Christ is the structure of that ‘space’ and the name of that secret.<sup>90</sup>

It strikes us that Dumas’ sketch of the changing places “where Bonhoeffer sets forth the truth about reality” does not give any credit to the context of his early journeys, despite Bonhoeffer’s explicit mentioning of them in explaining his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”. It clouds the importance of the “world” in Bonhoeffer’s thought from early on. For should not the concrete anthropological and sociological human dynamics of his early journeys be seen as constitutive of the reality within which Bonhoeffer discovers his christological ontology? In addition his argument about the unchanging content within the changing context stresses the continuity of Bonhoeffer’s theology to the point that he excludes, as Green also highlights, “any *real* development and any decisive turnings and breakthroughs in his

[Bonhoeffer's] life and thinking."<sup>91</sup> As a consequence the continuity of Bonhoeffer's thought is rooted in an "unchanging idea-system and method."<sup>92</sup> In this sense Green is right when he argues: "In his appropriate desire to show the continuity of Bonhoeffer's theology, Dumas has turned human reality into a conceptual abstraction ..."<sup>93</sup> This kind of abstraction has made reality "more phraseological than real, to use Bonhoeffer's own language."<sup>94</sup> Responding to Dumas' initial dictum that "the story of a man's life does not create his thought", Green quotes Bonhoeffer's comment that "Man is created from earth, and does not consist of air or thoughts."<sup>95</sup> It is along those lines that Bonhoeffer's early journeys are able to root his ontological structuralism and the notion of religion as "unreality" in the concrete reality of human encounter and sociality.

In his book *Der Wirklichkeit begegnen* Michael Weinrich discusses one particular theological approach of understanding reality. More specifically he undertakes "durch eine Analyse der unterschiedlichen theologischen Rezeptionen der personalistischen Entdeckung der Wirklichkeit die Frage nach der Wirklichkeit in der Theologie ihrer Unbestimmtheit zu entnehmen."<sup>96</sup> Weinrich's careful examination of personalism as a religious-philosophical line of thought evolves around its concern with "Wirklichkeitsverlust". In this respect Weinrich highlights personalism's particular opposition to idealism. Driven by a critique of idealism and the modern developments of the 19th century, personalism is concerned to recover "die eigentliche Dimension der Wirklichkeit"<sup>97</sup> and to enable humankind to experience reality. The term "Wirklichkeit" was discovered in a specific way by personalism in the wake of the collapse of the First World War. The catastrophe of the First World War marks a harsh disruption in the European history of thought revealing the deep crisis in which idealism found itself and engendering a re-orientation in all dimensions of research, including the disciplines of philosophy and theology. Idealism's understanding of reality is sketched as follows: "Im Idealismus wird Wirklichkeit begrifflich präsentiert, d.h. sie kommt als eine begriffene Wirklichkeit in den Blick, welche schon alles, was an Realitätserfahrung möglich ist, in sich aufgenommen hat."<sup>98</sup> Personalism counters such an approach for "Wirklichkeit wird hier nicht mehr im Modus der vernünftigen Erkenntnis und des Wissens erfahren."<sup>99</sup> As a consequence one no longer begins with "einer gestalteten Wirklichkeit ..., die vom Wissen abbildbar ist

und sich im Wissen selbst offenbart, sondern man geht von einer kontingenten, ungestalteten Wirklichkeit aus, die im Akt ihres In-Erscheinung-Tretens wahrgenommen wird.<sup>100</sup> Personalism's central category is thereby "die ungeplante und unplanbare *Begegnung*...":

Die Begegnung symbolisiert geradezu die Kontingenz der Wirklichkeit. Hier kommt die Wirklichkeit nicht im wissenschaftlichen, sondern eher im künstlerischen oder ethischen Sinne zur Sprache. Der Mensch stößt emphatisch auf die Selbstmitteilungen der Wirklichkeit. Daher kann sie nur ästhetisch, dichterisch, prophetisch oder handelnd begriffen werden, und dazu bietet sie sich demjenigen an, der sensibel *ihren erfahrbaren Anspruch* an den Menschen wahrzunehmen bereit ist.<sup>101</sup>

It is this longing for an experience of reality in opposition to idealism that found an influential reception in various theological concepts of the 1920s. In his reading of Gogarten, Bonhoeffer and Hirsch Weinrich maintains, "daß die Frage nach der Wirklichkeit in dieser Zeit - zumindest für die hier aufgeführten Vertreter - zu einer Grundfrage geworden ist, an welcher man sein Selbstverständnis zu gewinnen suchte."<sup>102</sup>

But instead of creating another theory of reality, personalism only intends to unravel idealism's "Wirklichkeitsverlust" and to suggest "unsystematisierte Hinweise auf eine unbegreifbare Wirklichkeit."<sup>103</sup> Given the primary focus of his analysis on the time between the First World War and Hitler's rise to power, Weinrich's reading of Bonhoeffer is limited to Bonhoeffer's early writings *Sanctorum Communio* and *Akt und Sein* which portray the systematic unfolding of one argument.<sup>104</sup> Bonhoeffer is said to have drawn on personalism in order to indicate "die von der Vernunft unüberschreitbare Grenze der Rationalisierung menschlicher Wirklichkeit ..."<sup>105</sup> In line with personalism Bonhoeffer argues against the attempt to describe human beings epistemologically. His concern is, therefore, "sein Denken an die erfahrbare Wirklichkeit des Menschen zu binden, d.h. er übernimmt in eigener Rezeption die Entdeckung des wirklichen konkreten Menschen, der in den Widersprüchen und Beziehungen zum Du des anderen Menschen sein Leben findet."<sup>106</sup> But his interest also lies in positively conceptualizing reality. He recognizes personalism's limits and

deficiency and suggests a complementary view of personalism and idealism. Summarizing Bonhoeffer's understanding of reality as emerging from his two early writings Weinrich concludes: "Wirklichkeit ist nach Bonhoeffer der dynamische, konkret erfahrbare Prozeß ethisch-sozial voneinander getrennter und miteinander in verantwortlicher Beziehung stehender individueller Personen."<sup>107</sup> In this sense Bonhoeffer turns "gegen die geistgegründete Einheit der idealistischen Person, die von sich aus im Rekurs auf die Allgemeinheit des Geistes die interpersonale Interaktion im Rahmen von Subjekt und Objekt entwirft, ohne damit in die konkrete Welt der Erfahrung vordringen zu können."<sup>108</sup> As a consequence reality is at this stage envisioned "als nur ethisch beschreibbare Interpersonalität": "Sie geht nicht in den Begriff ein, sondern verharrt in der Kontingenz, der nur in der Anerkennung der jeweiligen ethischen Ansprüche entscheidungshaft Rechnung getragen werden kann."<sup>109</sup> It is in this sense that "das Erlebnis der Wirklichkeit dem systematischen Denken eine reale Schranke [setzt]."<sup>110</sup> And it is the person who fundamentally constitutes reality. With the help of personalism's concept of the person Bonhoeffer manages to overcome idealism's deficient description of sociality: "Person ist nicht die Selbstbeschreibung des Ich, sondern sie entsteht in der Bedrängnis durch das Du, das in ethisch-sozialer Transzendenz vom Ich getrennt ist."<sup>111</sup> And yet the person is not constituted anthropologically but theologically: "ihre Wirklichkeit leitet sich exklusiv aus ihrer Gottursprünglichkeit ab, so sehr sie sich auch ontisch ausschließlich in der realen Dynamik der Begegnung von Ich und Du ereignet."<sup>112</sup>

But apart from his critique of idealism, Bonhoeffer regards certain elements of idealism as indispensable. Personalism's I-You relationship does not fully describe reality's truth: "Es bedarf eines objektiven Grundes, d.h. eines Kriteriums zur Beurteilung, das Bonhoeffer schließlich in der Kirche findet."<sup>113</sup> "Das ethisch beschriebene Ich-Du-Verhältnis lebt von einer nicht-ethischen, sondern ontologischen Voraussetzung, die Bonhoeffer dem Idealismus entnimmt."<sup>114</sup> "Alle empirische Interpersonalität ist von einer 'wesensmäßigen Gemeinschaft', von einer 'geistgesetzten Sozialität' getragen."<sup>115</sup> "Die Gemeinschaft lebt aus der Gleichzeitigkeit der ethisch beschreibbaren personalen Konfrontation kontingent aneinander entstehender und doch für sich bleibender Individuen und der metaphysisch beschreibbaren überindividuellen Objektivität als des Ermöglichungsgrundes für

Kontinuität freisetzende Kommunikation.”<sup>116</sup> The “Gemeinschaft” is understood as the church whose reality is constituted by God’s revelation. Hence characterized by the ethical decision reality does not only exist “im ungedeuteten Selbstvollzug unplanbarer Interaktion, sondern sie wird in der christologischen Interpretation der Gottursprünglichkeit der Person gedeutet, so daß die Christologie zum entscheidenden Definitionsort menschlicher Personalität und d.h. immer gleichzeitig Sozialität wird.”<sup>117</sup> In this respect the concept of “Stellvertretung” represents the core of this christological explanation: “Indem in Christus der sündige Mensch mit Gott real versöhnt ist, liegt hier alle Wirklichkeit des Menschen beschlossen, die er niemals bei sich selbst zu finden vermag.”<sup>118</sup> It also becomes the basis for sociality: “Der in Christus realisierten Gottesgemeinschaft entspricht der Mensch in analogia relationis durch menschliche Stellvertretung, d.h. durch Wahrnehmung seiner Gemeinschaftlichkeit im Glauben an die in Christus real verwirklichte Gemeinschaft.”<sup>119</sup> In this sense the christological basis of the person’s identity corresponds with the role “Gemeinschaft” plays in the overcoming of “der entscheidungshaften Begegnung von Ich und Du als der undeutbaren, nur erlebbaren Wirklichkeit des Menschen durch den Gedanken der Gemeinschaft.”<sup>120</sup> Therefore “Gemeinschaft” becomes the interpretative key “zunächst nur erlebbarer Personalität und entnimmt damit die Wirklichkeit ihrer Unbegriffenheit ...”<sup>121</sup> In other words, “im Begriff der Gemeinschaft wird das kontingente Erlebnis zu einer gedeuteten Erfahrung der Wirklichkeit. In ihr wird das Erlebnis sprachfähig. Sie qualifiziert die unableitbare Begegnung als Wirklichkeitserfahrung.”<sup>122</sup> While its interpretation according to Bonhoeffer will have to distinguish between the theological and the socio-philosophical aspect, the two aspects cannot be separated. By avoiding an understanding of sociality as dialogical interpersonal and suggesting sociality as an experience of “gemeinschaftliche Gemeinde”, Bonhoeffer makes it clear that “die konkrete ethische Betroffenheit des Ich durch das Du nicht die letzte Instanz des Personalismus [ist] ...”<sup>123</sup>

Hence, while “gemeinschaftliches Sein” may very well be ontologically experienced as a confrontation of the I and Thou, it is only through faith that this event becomes an experience of the reality of the church. Bonhoeffer thereby safeguards against the danger of “einerseits dem Du in platter Umkehrung des idealistischen Subjekt-Objekt-

Schemas nun alle Bestimmungspotenz anzuvertrauen (Grisebach und Gogarten) oder andererseits alle Wirklichkeit in dem gefeierten kontingenten Ereignis deutungsloser Interpersonalität aufzulösen und jede Rechenschaft als tote, allein die Vergangenheit betreffende Wahrheit zu qualifizieren.”<sup>124</sup> The human response to this encounter with reality is seen to go beyond “ästhetischer Bewunderung oder ethischer Hörigkeit ...”<sup>125</sup> Instead, one’s understanding of the reality of God’s revelation becomes the “Interpretationsschlüssel allen Erlebens.”<sup>126</sup> The problem of such an understanding, as Weinrich points out, “liegt einerseits in der Prävalenz der idealistisch geprägten Seinsbestimmtheit des Denkens und damit der Vernachlässigung der Grenzzeitlichkeit des kontingenten Erlebnisses und andererseits in der Identifikation des Seinsbegriffs mit der Vorfindlichkeit und der daraus folgenden unzulänglichen Kritik des Faktischen.”<sup>127</sup> And yet, it also becomes clear that the “idealistische Konstitution des Gemeinschaftsbegriffs ... nicht den Zielpunkt der Ausführungen Bonhoeffers [bildet], vielmehr liegt dieser in der existential-ontologischen Abfassung seiner Ekklesiologie.”<sup>128</sup> It is therefore argued that “das idealistische Element neben dem Personalismus zu relativieren [ist].”<sup>129</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s methodological approach reflects the attempt to capture “die konkrete und erfahrbare Gestalt des Wirkens Gottes ...”<sup>130</sup> The starting point is problematic, since Bonhoeffer tries “diese von dem indispensable Charakter der vorfindlichen Wirklichkeit aus zu begründen, indem er der ‘Konkretheit der empirischen Kirche eine unüberspringbare Apriorität von Wissen und Denken’ zuweist.”<sup>131</sup> This concrete reality is then understood through personalism’s concept of encounter and interpreted via idealism. At the heart of this approach is the conviction, “daß die Theologie von der Wirklichkeit auf die Notwendigkeit schließt.”<sup>132</sup> This, of course, creates a particular dependency, since “die Theologie [damit] in eine grundsätzliche Vergleichbarkeit mit der empirischen Wissenschaft [gerät], als welche sie erst im nachhinein nach dem Wesen fragt.”<sup>133</sup> At the same time idealism’s “transzendente Geistmetaphysik” is being critiqued via personalism in view of “die Unverrechenbarkeit individueller Erfahrungen und Ansprüche ... , um die konkrete menschliche Existenz in den Blick nehmen zu können.”<sup>134</sup> As a result Bonhoeffer’s argument suggests the following important distinction: “Das konkrete Leben folgt nicht der Notwendigkeit des Begriffs, sondern ist umstellt von unüberschreitbaren

Grenzen individueller Erfahrung.”<sup>135</sup> It implies that “das Leben nur im Vollzug wahrnehmbar [ist]; es läßt sich nicht begrifflich erfassen, sondern nur ethisch ernst nehmen.”<sup>136</sup> But since this only captures one important aspect of reality, idealism’s category of the objective spirit constituting “Gemeinschaft” thus frames personalism’s ethical existence without neglecting the concrete person. It is within this existential ontology that both levels of argumentation come together, “indem dort einerseits die Existentialität des ethischen Personalismus und andererseits die idealistisch gewonnene ontologische Kategorie der Geistgemeinschaft aufgenommen werden, für deren Zusammenhang die Christologie in der ausgeführten Entfaltung entsteht.”<sup>137</sup>

Weinrich’s study on personalism’s influence on Bonhoeffer’s understanding of reality questions Dumas’ polarization of Christian faith as a structuring versus an encounter, highlighting the importance of “good boundaries”, thus confronting the transgressiveness of religion but also safeguarding genuine encounter and true sociality. The importance of personalism’s notion of encounter for understanding Bonhoeffer’s concept of reality links in well with our attempt to explore the connections between his early theological writings and his early intercultural encounters.

Ernst Feil’s seminal work on Bonhoeffer’s theology also emphasizes the christological nature of Bonhoeffer’s understanding of reality: “so ist auch der Wirklichkeitsbegriff Bonhoeffers nur im Zusammenhang mit seiner Christologie verständlich.”<sup>138</sup> Given those christological brackets reality is suggested as “ein theologischer Begriff, der von Gott und der Welt ausgesagt wird.”<sup>139</sup> Feil therefore maintains “daß der Begriff Wirklichkeit für Bonhoeffer ein nur im theologischen Sinn adäquat verstandener und zu verstehender Begriff ist.”<sup>140</sup> Discussing Bonhoeffer’s central “Gegenbegriffe zum Wirklichkeitsbegriff” Feil unfolds Bonhoeffer’s critique of “Möglichkeit”, “Abstraktion”, and “Idee” as developed in *Sanctorum Communio*, *Akt und Sein*, and *Ethik*. It is in contrast to these concepts that Bonhoeffer is perceived to emphasize the concreteness of reality.<sup>141</sup> For through any other category “wird statt wahrer Transzendenz nur eine Scheintranszendenz, statt wahrer Existenz nur ein selbstmächtiges Leben aus dem ‘cor curvum’ erreicht, aber keine echte Grenze und kein echtes “von außen” gegeben.”<sup>142</sup> The notion of genuine boundary and “von



außen" is also reflected in Bonhoeffer's suggestion, "daß über dem Erkennen das Anerkennen steht."<sup>143</sup> It is perceived to counter "die 'idealistische' Dominanz der Erkenntnis, die ihm zu wenig das Geheimnis deutlich zu machen schien."<sup>144</sup> Reality's meaning is hence developed in stark contrast to the "positivistisch-empirischen Wirklichkeitsbegriff ... , der kein Geheimnis kennt"<sup>145</sup> and "der die Weigerung jeder Begründung dieser Wirklichkeit in der letzten Wirklichkeit, in Gott einschließt ..."<sup>146</sup> The empiric-vulgar comprehension of reality is seen to correspond to the "geheimnislosen Leben" discussed in a sermon from 1934 and to the "platten Diesseitigkeit" commented on in a letter from prison.<sup>147</sup> Hence, according to Feil, the notion of "Geheimnis" constitutes an important "Leitmotiv" of Bonhoeffer's theology:

Die Unterscheidung von Glauben und Denken entstammt der Erfahrung der Armut des Denkens angesichts des Glaubens. Von der Mitte des unausdenkbaren Glaubens, vom Geheimnis, nimmt Bonhoeffers Denken seinen Ausgang, zu ihm strebt es zurück. Es ist die Mitte, von der her die reflexe Unterscheidung von Glaube und Vernunft, von actus directus und actus reflexus notwendig wird.<sup>148</sup>

Thus Feil emphasizes that reality is a term which according to Bonhoeffer cannot be defined, but only insinuated.<sup>149</sup> On the other hand, "Daß die Wirklichkeit Gottes nicht selbst wieder eine Idee ist, entnimmt der christliche Glaube aus der Tatsache, daß diese Wirklichkeit Gottes sich selbst bezeugt und offenbart hat mitten in der wirklichen Welt ..."<sup>150</sup> Reality is then "zunächst und zuerst Gott, Gott in Jesus Christus verstanden, der allein '*der Wirkliche*' ist. Gott ist die letzte Wirklichkeit (...), und nur in ihm ruht alle Wirklichkeit ..."<sup>151</sup>

These thematic-systematic approaches are now contrasted with more biographical and socio-political readings of Bonhoeffer's turning. In his biography on Bonhoeffer Eberhard Bethge interprets this turning "from the phraseological to the real" as "Die Wendung des Theologen zum Christen"<sup>152</sup> and locates it around the period, "in der er [Bonhoeffer] seine Wirksamkeit in Universität, Kirche und Ökumene begann."<sup>153</sup> Bethge's argument takes its lead from Bonhoeffer's reference to the seemingly contradictory passages of the first and second letter to Timothy, which emphasize discontinuity and continuity with one's past: "der ich zuvor war ein Lästlerer ..." und

‘ich diene von meinen Voreltern her in reinem Gewissen’(1.Tim.1,13 und 2.Tim.1,3).”<sup>154</sup> Given Bonhoeffer’s strong resistance to testimonies about conversion experiences, he kept hidden the personal change of 1932, confiding only in a few intimate friends and members of his family.<sup>155</sup> One was therefore able to see “Resultate einer Wandlung, aber nicht die Wandlung selbst.”<sup>156</sup> People were struck by “[der] Weite des Wissens, ...[der] konzentrierte[n] Arbeitsenergie, ...[der] analytische[n] und kritische[n] Denkkraft” and finally by “ein[em] zusammenhaltende[n] persönliche[n] Engagement[s], welches in lauter praktischen Verhaltensweisen sichtbar wurde.”<sup>157</sup>

Introducing us to various voices and stories witnessing to this major turn Bethge brings to the fore Bonhoeffer’s new existential commitment to the church, his meditative approach to the bible, the new emphasis on personal confession, the repeated deliberations on the need for the *vita communis*, his serious engagement with the sermon on the mount and his support for a Christian pacifism.<sup>158</sup> The only direct testimony about this change from Bonhoeffer himself is found in the beginning of a letter written to a close friend on 27 January, 1936.<sup>159</sup> It is in this passage that Bonhoeffer describes the change as one from being a theologian to also becoming a Christian. It is in particular the sermon on the mount which is credited for this “liberation” from personal “ambition”, “self-advancement”, and “self-satisfaction” leading to a new commitment to the church. And it is Christian pacifism which Bonhoeffer especially highlights as one of the new insights gained through this turn. According to Bethge, these reflections also explain his rather negative comment to Sutz about his book *Akt und Sein* describing it “als ‘inzwischen ziemlich unsympathisch geworden ...’”<sup>160</sup> In a similar vein, but somewhat more reserved, he writes to his brother Karl-Friedrich in January 1935:

Aber ich glaube nun endlich zu wissen, wengstens einmal auf die richtige Spur gekommen zu sein - zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben. Und das macht mich oft sehr glücklich ... Ich glaube zu wissen, daß ich eigentlich erst innerlich klar und wirklich aufrichtig sein würde, wenn ich mit der Bergpredigt wirklich anfinde, Ernst zu machen. ... Es gibt doch nun einmal Dinge, für die es sich lohnt, kompromißlos einzutreten.

Und mir scheint, der Friede und die soziale Gerechtigkeit, oder eigentlich Christus, sei so etwas.<sup>161</sup>

Bethge interprets these more personal remarks as the demarcation for the turn. And yet he also reckons that we should think of it more in terms of a process. For “die Gewißheit und Freude an dem Engagement hat sich wohl doch in einem längeren Ringen eingestellt.”<sup>162</sup> Interestingly, in this respect Bethge refers to a letter from New York in which Bonhoeffer writes to one of his Grunewald friends about the “‘neuen Anschauungen’, die seine Philosophie und Theologie veränderten.”<sup>163</sup> Bethge hence explicitly links the period of wrestling preceding the decisive turn with his experiences abroad, a link which my own analysis has explored. Bethge also mentions how “jene selbstquälerischen heimlichen Skizzen von der Berufsenthüllung in der Oberprima und der Todessehnsucht wohl aus der zweiten Hälfte von 1932 [stammen], aus der Zeit als er in der Vorlesung ‘Schöpfung und Sünde’ so intensiv über den ‘Anfang’, den man nicht wissen kann und soll, arbeitete und vortrug.”<sup>164</sup> Hence, Bonhoeffer himself seems to caution a reading of his turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” as marking a clearly determinable “beginning”. Bethge’s reminder – that one saw “Resultate einer Wandlung, aber nicht die Wandlung selbst”<sup>165</sup> – also recognizes the importance of considering whatever previous events or experiences might have contributed to this turning. And yet strikingly in his biography Bethge refers to Bonhoeffer’s comment on turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” without further considering Bonhoeffer’s own observation that it was during his early travels and under the influence of the father that he experienced this turning.

In his book on Bonhoeffer’s early theology Clifford Green devotes a whole chapter on the turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”.<sup>166</sup> The completion of this turning is - in line with Bethge’s biography - dated in the year 1932 following “the two previous years, [in which] several experiences and deep, personal concerns had affected him profoundly.”<sup>167</sup> Green follows Bethge in terms of interpreting the turning as a liberation, but at the same time argues more specifically that it most clearly illuminates to what extent the problem of the powerful ego in Bonhoeffer’s early theology is also the major personal problem for the theologian himself: “We see how his intellectual work and brilliantly successful achievements in academic theology are

deeply rooted in his personal history, and how his autobiographical memoirs and letters describe his own personal problem in terms identical to his analysis of sin in many theological texts up to 1932.”<sup>168</sup> Understanding Bonhoeffer’s early theology as a “theology of sociality”, Green points out that theological anthropology and soteriology are central themes in his formative writings.<sup>169</sup> The anthropology employed in this early thought introduces us to “a clear and consistent set of categories which articulate the meaning of ‘sociality.’”<sup>170</sup> Embedded within this theology of sociality the ecclesiology of *Sanctorum Communio* engages “a distinctive and modern soteriological problem in this anthropology which is clearly related to the Christology: human power in both its personal form (the power of the ego) and its social form.”<sup>171</sup> In *Akt und Sein*, on the other hand, Bonhoeffer discusses the transcendentalist-idealist and the ontological traditions in philosophy and theology current at the time, which provides him with the necessary tools to sharpen “his phenomenology of the soteriological problem on its personal side, namely, the power of the ego.”<sup>172</sup> Calling attention to Bonhoeffer’s opening critique of philosophical anthropology Green observes: “It is a fundamental, and sometimes even passionate, attack on the intellectual, philosophical self: the unlimited and dominating ‘knowing I’ in its power violates man’s personal and social being with others.”<sup>173</sup> But what does Green mean when he claims that Bonhoeffer’s soteriological problem is centered on the power of the dominating ego? It is an understanding of “‘power as dominance’” which is basic to Green’s analysis and contrasted to “‘power as capacity necessary for self-fulfillment ...’”<sup>174</sup> He therefore contends “that it is precisely by dealing with *dominating power* in his theological and personal pilgrimage that Bonhoeffer is able to arrive at that Christian celebration of human *strength* and *maturity* which is so conspicuous in the prison writings.”<sup>175</sup>

Green’s use of the terms “ego” and “self” need clarification, especially since our own analysis builds on these working definitions. Though the term “ego” is used deliberately, it is understood to point to a particular aspect of the human self in line with the psychoanalytic tradition of Freud and the post-Freudians.<sup>176</sup> The term “ego” refers to a particular set of activities of the unified and conscious self.<sup>177</sup> The concept of the “self” is, on the other hand, used “to refer to the whole personality, including, together with the ego, those unconscious aspects designated in psychological theory as

id and superego.”<sup>178</sup> While not wanting to elevate the ego as the sole seat of power or to arbitrarily isolate ego from id and superego, Green explains his particular focus on the ego in view of Bonhoeffer’s understanding of the soteriological problem as the problem of the power of the dominating ego.<sup>179</sup> Bonhoeffer’s special focus is further clarified in a broad, historical perspective: “Speaking generally, we can consider the asceticism of the classical Christian tradition as related to the id in psychological theory, and Luther’s preoccupation with the problem of conscience as related to the superego, especially in its negative, accusing function.”<sup>180</sup> Bonhoeffer, in contrast, is not occupied with instinctual drives or “the guilty conscience with its repressed anger and compulsive works” but with “whether the powers of the ego will be used for the service of others, or whether they will function in a dominating and ego-centric way.”<sup>181</sup>

The problem of power is intrinsic to Bonhoeffer’s theology of sociality, “in that dominating power violates both the interpersonal relations and the corporate operations of human communities and institutions.”<sup>182</sup> To substantiate his argument Green discusses “seven passages which, often formulated in identical phrases, consistently identify the soteriological problem from 1927 to 1932.”<sup>183</sup> He identifies the following four major themes in these passages: “the *power* of the ego, its *dominance* of others, the *violation of created sociality*, and the function of *conscience* in accusing the isolated self and exhorting man to his ‘better self’.”<sup>184</sup> Referring to passages in *Sanctorum Communio* and *Akt und Sein* Green sums up Bonhoeffer’s anthropological views as follows: The human being described by Bonhoeffer “is a ‘creator and lord,’ ruling over all he surveys. A godlike figure, he is the ‘creator and bearer of a world.’ ... ‘The thought and philosophy of man in sin is self-glorifying’; intellectual activity serves the glory of the self.”<sup>185</sup> As a consequence human being “exists in and as the center of a ‘self-interpreted world’.”<sup>186</sup> The consequences for one’s understanding of reality and truth are fatal, for both “are grounded in ... [one’s] own interpretation and knowledge ...”<sup>187</sup> Given the fact that conscience is then an instrument of one’s power, and not the means of one’s defeat, moral self-knowledge can only be seen to serve self-justification.<sup>188</sup> The result of such autocratic egocentricity is the “self-interpreted world” as “self-dominated” world.”<sup>189</sup> Such a self-interpreted world and the implied notion of self-sufficiency violate created

sociality by removing God and others as genuine boundary: "they are not genuine 'others' to be loved and served in mutuality, but things to be used."<sup>190</sup> Bonhoeffer's critique also unmasks conscience's trickery which "disguises the mute loneliness ... in the self-dominated and self-interpreted world" and represents "the attempt to 'take the place of the missing other,' to 'feign the presence and reality of an other in his life.'"<sup>191</sup>

As a consequence there are two ways of perceiving conscience: "Negatively, conscience is the self-accusation which arises from violated sociality. Positively, conscience is also man's self-exhortation to live up to his 'better self,' that is, to relate freely to others in love and service."<sup>192</sup> In this sense Green pinpoints the dilemma of conscience in Bonhoeffer's phenomenology as one of being a self-serving instrument, "the ultimate grasp of man for himself, the confirmation and justification of his autocratic solitude."<sup>193</sup> Conscience as "*self-accusation and self-exhortation* ... is [therefore] a powerful means of self-assertion and self-justification ..."<sup>194</sup> Green recognizes a striking consistency of this very thought and language when looking at Bonhoeffer's inaugural lecture on "The Question of Man in Contemporary Philosophy and Theology" delivered on 31 July, 1930, two papers he wrote at Union Theological Seminary, his lectures on "Creation and Sin" given during the 1932-33 winter semester, and finally a personal reflection from 1932 upon an experience he had as a high school student.<sup>195</sup>

Luther's notion of the *cor curvum in se* is also re-interpreted by Bonhoeffer in view of this particular interest. While "The soteriological problem in Luther, theologically and personally, centers on the guilty conscience"<sup>196</sup> Bonhoeffer makes the Reformer speak to the problematic of power in human social relations.<sup>197</sup> It is along those line that "the main Christological and anthropological answer, which runs from the earliest writings to the theology of the prison letters, develops the theme of God's freedom for man and Christ's freedom as 'the man for others' who liberates man into service and vicarious action in free responsibility for others."<sup>198</sup>

Bonhoeffer's writings on the problem of the powerful ego runs parallel to his concern with the problem of power in society raising issues of domination and exploitation.

Green notes how “in his discussions of the sin of the self he always considers the human person set in a social matrix, to the extent of according ‘general egotism’ a large part in the empirical spread of sin, and describing Adam (the Kollektivperson of fallen humanity) as personifying the ‘extreme egocentricity’ of mankind as a whole.”<sup>199</sup> Seven years later in London Bonhoeffer branded particular instances of social exploitation – among others the untouchables of India and the Afro-Americans in the States - by inveighing “against ‘an aristocratic philosophy of life which glorified strength and power and violence as the ultimate ideals of humanity.’”<sup>200</sup> The church was indicted “for having ‘adjusted itself far too easily to the worship of power,’ and he asserted that ‘Christianity stands or falls with its *revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness and pride of power and with its plea for the weak.*’”<sup>201</sup>

Looking at the autobiographical dimension of Bonhoeffer’s theology Green also recognizes “a deep, personal concern ... at work along with the theological, philosophical, exegetical, ecclesiastical, and political factors which informed his thinking.”<sup>202</sup> In line with Bethge’s biography Green identifies the year of 1932 as the period of a personal liberation which is seen to illuminate the theological path he had already travelled. In fact, Green maintains that “Without a knowledge of this autobiographical dimension, understanding of Bonhoeffer’s theological development would be darkened by inner obscurity or externally imposed speculation, or both.”<sup>203</sup> At the same time we need to bear in mind that there is no evidence that Bonhoeffer was fully conscious of the interrelation of his theology and his personal concern. According to his letters from 1936, the kind of liberation Bonhoeffer experienced is interpreted as relating to “the problem of the ego and its power.”<sup>204</sup> Examining the letter to a friend written on 27 January, 1936, Green perceives a radical change of mind in Bonhoeffer’s acknowledgment “that the motivation for his previous theological work had been ambition and self-advancement.”<sup>205</sup> In particular the bible’s influence in the turn is highlighted: “The Bible, and especially the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, shattered this self-satisfied egotism and for the first time leads the theologian to a serious commitment to personal discipleship in the church.”<sup>206</sup> Green is right to identify the soteriological problem of the powerful ego as the central theme in those autobiographical passages. And therefore Green concludes that “In

1932 Bonhoeffer finds the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount to be a genuine 'other' who stands where the divine 'Doppelgänger' previously stood."<sup>207</sup>

But Green also guards against a misunderstanding when speaking of the power of the ego, suggesting an important distinction "between activities in the realm of the ego's powers, and personal behavior in relating to others."<sup>208</sup> For while "Bonhoeffer's soteriological passages speak of egocentricity, selfishness, dominance, autocracy, violation, and so on" Green maintains that these words cannot be taken "as a simple or complete description of his personal relations with family, friends, and associates during his early life ..."<sup>209</sup> "Their testimonies to his character speak of sensitiveness, generosity, fairness, cooperation, helpfulness, considerateness, and other appealing traits ..."<sup>210</sup> Green therefore argues that whenever Bonhoeffer showed signs of an attitude of superiority, aggressiveness, competitiveness and ambition they "were channeled chiefly into *intellectual and professional pursuit*, especially theology."<sup>211</sup> It is for this very reason that according to Green "Bonhoeffer's personal crisis which came to a head in 1932 was centered on his vocation and his professional life. It is also the reason for the critique of boundless intellect, the self-glorification of man in thought and philosophy, and the violation of a 'self-interpreted world' which features so prominently in the passages on the anthropological problematic."<sup>212</sup> Hence, the crux of the crisis is perceived to be "the clear contradiction between his vocational profession to be a servant of Christ, and his actual, conscious use of his vocation to serve his own ambition."<sup>213</sup> Understanding *Nachfolge* as a direct expression of his "becoming a Christian" Green recognizes a new commitment to obedience: "No longer is theology what he had described to Karl-Friedrich as an 'academic affair'; it is an existential matter of obedience of life. It is not 'phraseological,' but 'real'."<sup>214</sup> Bonhoeffer's emphasis on discipleship is perceived as an existential dimension to his theology of sociality. Green, hence, suggests that "Bonhoeffer's statements about earlier 'academic' or 'phraseological' theology should not be misread as a repudiation of his theological foundations. The phrase, 'from the phraseological to the real,' should be rather understood as adding existential reality to the conceptual structure of the theology of sociality."<sup>215</sup> It is seen as a decisive change "from the intellectual, verbal level into the reality of life."<sup>216</sup> It is a development in Bonhoeffer's theology which "simultaneously involves the full affirmation of ego strengths and autonomy in



himself and his contemporaries, and the liberation of these strengths for the life of free responsibility in personal and corporate relationships of human society.”<sup>217</sup> According to Green, the development of Bonhoeffer’s christology and the images of Christ he employed must be viewed in light of the anthropological and soteriological problems raised. Furthermore it is a “relationship between Christology and anthropology which ... is not simply theoretical, but which is rooted in the existential, spiritual pilgrimage of the theologian himself.”<sup>218</sup> *Sanctorum Communio*’s understanding of Christ as “Stellvertreter” is deepened to Christ as “Mittler” in the 1933 Christology lectures developing further the point that the “I” can never know the “other” as “I”, but only as “thou”. In fact, the Christology lectures are seen as a culmination of the theological path which began with *Sanctorum Communio*.<sup>219</sup> The notion of Christ as mediator “between a man and his own self, his relations with others, his dealings with society, and his relation to nature” enables Bonhoeffer to find “a way to overcome the problem of the self-centered, powerful ego enclosed in its own ideas, ambitions, will and desires.”<sup>220</sup> Green thereby also highlights the great political importance the notion of Christ as mediator plays in Bonhoeffer’s theology.<sup>221</sup> In the same way the theme of the incarnation of Christ was implicit throughout the theology of sociality until receiving an essential place in the Christology lectures: “Christ is present in human form – in the “other” as the form of revelation and transcendence, in the community of the church as the body of the present Christ (Christus als Gemeinde existierend).”<sup>222</sup> Therefore, according to Green, after the turning of 1932 his theology of sociality continues to characterize his writings.

Green’s argument hence suggests an intricate connection between the turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” and Bonhoeffer’s concern with the anthropological and soteriological problem.<sup>223</sup> The turn is interpreted as revolving around the anthropological problem of the dominating knowing “I” and the way its power violates both interpersonal relations and the corporate operations of human communities and institutions. Central to this argument is the view that the problem of the powerful ego in Bonhoeffer’s early theology is also the major personal problem for the theologian himself forming part of his existential pilgrimage. The turning represents a radical critique of “phraseological” theology to the degree that it remains an idle, intellectual, verbal and academic affair which lacks existential reality. For

Green the new engagement with the bible, i.e. the sermon of the mount, was the major driving force for this change of heart and mind leading to a new commitment to the church. Green therefore questions Bethge's emphasis on Bonhoeffer's experience of Catholic Rome as the origin of the theological themes of his early period and his reading of *Sanctorum Communio* as an exclusively ecclesiological book.<sup>224</sup> Green does not see Bonhoeffer's experience of St. Peter's as leading to a "necessary and programmatic commitment to develop the complex and sophisticated theology of sociality which begins in *Sanctorum Communio*."<sup>225</sup> Instead his argument builds on Bonhoeffer's intention to inform the whole of theology with sociality. In this respect he also highlights the important "experiential matrix" of his family in developing the theme of sociality representing, in short, "both a laboratory and a model of sociality ..."<sup>226</sup> But while Green acknowledges the family as an important social matrix he appears to underestimate the contribution Bonhoeffer's early journeys made to this turning, neglecting the fact that Rome and North Africa confronted Bonhoeffer with issues of sociality in terms of negotiating difference and otherness and the anthropological problem of power. Regarding the connection between his American experience and the discovery of the sermon on the mount - which, as we have seen, is interpreted as the key factor for his "great liberation" - reference to Bethge's biography is only made in an endnote.<sup>227</sup> A careful reading of Bonhoeffer's travel writings from America show that the encounters have contributed in much more than one way to Bonhoeffer's turning. Green's reluctance to consider Bonhoeffer's early journeys as an important part of his existential pilgrimage and "great liberation" is partly based on a rather peculiar interpretation of Bonhoeffer's comment on his turning "from the phraseological to the real". In an endnote (!) Green argues that

The English translation ("It was then that I turned from phraseology to reality." ...) suggests an almost causal sequence of overseas experience, his father's personality, and the ensuing personal "turning." Without contending that these influences are unrelated to his "turning away from the phraseological," I find two difficulties with the English rendering. First, it is misleading not to differentiate the ensuing personal experience more carefully from the earlier influences. As we shall see, many years prior to this 1944 statement Bonhoeffer had explicitly identified the *Bible* as the most decisive factor in this "turning," not his travels or his father. Second, careful

differentiation is required by the fact that this statement in the letter can hardly be read as a simple chronological sequence. Such a reading would require the assumption that his father's personality had no conscious influence upon him until *after* his travels in Spain and America, i.e., when, in 1932, he was twenty-six years of age; this assumption, I think, would be very difficult to sustain. Even if it were proven, however, the first reason would not be invalidated.<sup>228</sup>

Green's argument is neither grammatically nor logically sound. For the German original does in fact very much indicate a causal sequence of overseas experience, his father's personality and the personal turning. In addition the argument of the bible being the most decisive factor in this turning does not counter the importance of the travels, for it was during his stay in America that the bible, i.e. the sermon on the mount, gained a prominent role in his thinking. Thus the argument that a reading in view of a chronological sequence would have to imply that his father's personality had no influence upon him until after his travels in Spain and America is neither grammatically nor logically stringent. It rather poses the challenge of trying to understand why Bonhoeffer relates the experience of his travels to the influence of his father and whether this combination offers an important clue for understanding the turning. Interestingly Green's latter argument also seems to dismiss Bonhoeffer's travels to Italy and North Africa as irrelevant. I have argued in contrast that his early travels provide us with an important experiential matrix for understanding Bonhoeffer's concern with sociality and the problem of the powerful ego. In fact, his travel writings help us to avoid the constant danger of remaining too abstract, something very much at the heart of Bonhoeffer's own concern. Instead his travel encounters help us to "earth" the problem of the powerful ego from early on not only in his personal life but also in the reality of Bonhoeffer's intercultural encounters. It is there that Bonhoeffer's theological attack on the unlimited and dominating "knowing I" and its "self-interpreted world" gains its most concrete and relevant expression.

The editors of *Widerstand und Ergebung* comment on Bonhoeffer's remark on the turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen" only in view of the connection with the father.<sup>229</sup> They refer to an account of Dietrich's sister Sabine Leibholz in which she describes their father's particular distaste of "phrases" and the impact it had on the

children: "Seine Ablehnung der Phrase hat manchen von uns zu Zeit einsilbig und unsicher gemacht, aber erreicht, daß wir als Heranwachsende an Schlagwörtern, Geschwätz, Gemeinplätzen und Wortschwall keinen Geschmack mehr fanden. Dietrich hat das später dankbar empfunden ... Manchmal machte es Papa Spaß, uns Begriffe und Dinge definieren zu lassen. Wenn wir es klar und ohne Verschwommenheit fertigbrachten, freute ihn das."<sup>230</sup> Her comment identifies the father's influence in terms of linguistic sensitivity and locates the turning within the realm of representation. In a similar vein Jürgen Boomgaarden suggests the connection with the father as the correct "Sitz im Leben" of Bonhoeffer's phrase.<sup>231</sup> While he does mention Bonhoeffer's first experiences abroad as relating to the "Damals", he does not attribute to them the same importance as the father's influence.<sup>232</sup> Dating the turning hence at the beginning of the 1920s Boomgaarden opposes Bethge's position arguing that "Sowohl die Zeitangabe im Brief als auch die hier Dietrich zugeschriebene Dankbarkeit für des Vaters 'Ablehnung der Phrase' lassen eine Zuordnung jener Wendung zu Bonhoeffers Persönlichkeitskrise, die Anfang der dreißiger Jahre datiert werden dürfte, nicht als plausibel erscheinen."<sup>233</sup> This re-dating of the turning is important to his book's argument: "Ohne die schon eingeübte 'Wendung vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen' hätte sich Bonhoeffer bei der Abfassung von *Akt und Sein* in der damals wahrhaft verwirrenden Begriffswelt philosophisch-theologischer Rede hoffnungslos verirrt."<sup>234</sup> For if the "Abkehr vom Phraseologischen" is to be dated at the beginning of the twenties, then *Akt und Sein* does not fall under Bonhoeffer's negative judgement of phraseology, but will have to be considered as one positive outcome of the father's pressing for "Wirklichkeitsnähe".<sup>235</sup> Boomgaarden adds another perspective when he quotes Sabine Leibholz in order to highlight how the father's call for discipline was combined with the notion of freedom: "Papa war behutsam, uns nicht einzuengen, möglichst nicht zu beeinflussen, konnte zusehen und abwartend wachsen lassen, und wollte auch keine zu starken Bindungen schaffen."<sup>236</sup> Boomgaarden's interpretation of this father-son relationship in terms of its implications for Bonhoeffer's handling of the terminology in *Akt und Sein* identifies a particular tension as being characteristic of the book: "Diese positive Bindungslosigkeit, die Freiheit, ehrwürdige Begriffe respektlos umzuschreiben, zeichnet *Akt und Sein* ebenfalls aus. Ohne diese Spannung zwischen Freiheit und Strenge in der Begrifflichkeit besäße *Akt und Sein*

weder seinen eigenständigen Ansatz, der das Werk heute noch bedeutsam macht, noch seine systematische Komposition, die das Werk in den Rang echter systematischer Theologie hebt.”<sup>237</sup> Boomgaarden therefore concludes that the “Wirklichkeitsnähe” of *Akt und Sein* is also partly reflected in the constant awareness of the tension between “dem Begriff und dem zu Begreifenden oder nicht zu Begreifenden ...”<sup>238</sup> Hence like Sabine Leibholz Boomgaarden identifies the issue of representation as being part of Bonhoeffer’s concern for and experience of “Wirklichkeitsnähe”.

In his personal reminiscences, published in the critical Bonhoeffer edition on Barcelona, Berlin, and America (1928-1931), Hans Christian von Hase suggests a reading of the turning which comes closest to my own approach.<sup>239</sup> According to von Hase Bonhoeffer’s comment has to be associated with those early travel experiences: “Für ihn, der sich über seine innersten Erfahrungen nur sehr selten und verhalten äußerte, muß sich dementsprechend in den Jahren von Barcelona bis New York - 1928 bis 1931 - eine entscheidende Wendung und Reifung angebahnt haben, die es in der Materialfülle dieses Bandes aufzuspüren gilt.”<sup>240</sup> He interprets these accounts from the perspective of a cousin who followed in Bonhoeffer’s footsteps not only as assistant in Berlin but also as recipient of the same scholarship three years later in order to study at Union Theological Seminary in New York and to explore American church life and theology.<sup>241</sup> He highlights four themes which to him not only describe Bonhoeffer’s motivations to become a theologian, but also demonstrate his life-long connectedness with reality: “(1) Gott in seinem Zorn zu verstehen, (2) die Wirklichkeit seiner Gnaden Gegenwart in der Kirche zu begreifen (Sanctorum Communio), (3) für den Frieden arbeiten, und (4) mit dem Tod zu leben und im Blick auf die kommende Verfolgung auf die Ehe zu verzichten.”<sup>242</sup> These four themes run through his whole life and work portraying “einen sehr realen Bezug zur Wirklichkeit” and conveying everything but the phraseology of which Bonhoeffer accused himself.<sup>243</sup> Von Hase’s observations proof the notions of “reality” and “phraseology” to be of crucial value for understanding the nature and importance of Bonhoeffer’s intercultural experiences. One main interpretative horizon for these terms is determined by many of their theological teacher’s “Suche nach der ‘Wirklichkeit’ der Offenbarung oder des Sinnes in der gegenwärtigen Welt.”<sup>244</sup> This quest was mirrored in many of the student’s dissertations of which Bonhoeffer’s

*Sanctorum Communio* is just one example.<sup>245</sup> But apparently there was a critical distance to and serious questioning of their teacher's approach. For "phraseology" became the tag with which Bonhoeffer branded a certain strand of theological reasoning:

Wir jungen Theologen [von Hase and others] entdeckten, daß unsere Lehrer ihr theologisches 'System' mehr oder weniger auf den 'wissenschaftlichen' Voraussetzungen der kantischen oder hegelschen Philosophie aufbauten, die aber mit der biblischen Gotteslehre und Christologie, vor allem aber auch der Anthropologie, nicht übereinzubringen waren. Der Darwinismus wurde in der Theologie damals – sträflicherweise – übersehen. Er überrumpelte 1933 die Geister. An den vielen Existenzdeutungen arbeiteten wir uns ab. Bonhoeffers 'Akt und Sein' ist ein umfassender Versuch, sich mit den z.T. genialen Entwürfen der Philosophen unserer Zeit auseinanderzusetzen. In seiner Habilitationsvorlesung kommt er zu dem Ergebnis, daß sie alle unbrauchbar seien, denn 'das theologische Denken gehört allein der Kirche'. 'Jesus, der Mensch für andere', paßt in kein System.<sup>246</sup>

"Phraseology", then, represents at the heart a christological critique of those theological "systems" built on Kantian and Hegelian presuppositions. "Jesus, der Mensch für andere" is said to undermine the legitimacy of any kind of system. The church alone is proposed as the place for theological thinking.<sup>247</sup> This explains the argument of *Sanctorum Communio*, "daß die Wirklichkeit der Offenbarung nur in der real existierenden Gemeinde zu entdecken sei, daß 'Christus als Gemeinde existierend' erfaßt werden müsse."<sup>248</sup> But these assumptions, as von Hase points out, still had to stand the test of his visits to Barcelona and New York. He encourages us to read Bonhoeffer's travel experiences in the light of this search for the reality of revelation and offers us a first glimpse of the different aspects which come into play.<sup>249</sup> We are made aware of the strong impression his association with the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem made on Bonhoeffer: "Von der tiefen Frömmigkeit, der Christusliebe und der Gemeinschaft dieser Schwarzen trug er einen starken Eindruck lebenslang mit sich."<sup>250</sup> But it also sensitized him to the importance of the church's position on racial issues in order to maintain its faith and credibility.<sup>251</sup> Bonhoeffer's wrestling with American philosophies like pragmatism and behaviorism had greater influence than Bonhoeffer seems to have been willing to

concede, "denn er lernte, was der deutschen Theologie an Wirklichkeitsnähe fehlte und welche echten theologischen Fragen hinter den ethischen und gesellschaftspolitischen Herausforderungen der Kirchen standen."<sup>252</sup> Hence, according to von Hase, Bonhoeffer's concern for the reality of revelation received new inspiration abroad in view of its place and its boundaries as well as its political, ethical and personal implications. In this respect von Hase's other two themes, i.e. Bonhoeffer's striving for peace and his constant awareness of living with death, have to be understood not only as examples of Bonhoeffer's connectedness with reality but also as two important expressions of his search for the reality of revelation. His ethics of peace "de-limited" a national understanding of church, while his reflections on death from a more general and a more personal perspective found a powerful focal point in his letters from prison, where he talks about faith as a way of being drawn into the suffering of God in this world.

In the afterword of the same critical edition editor Reinhart Staats introduces us to what he coins a "theologische Geographie", a term we expand on in view of Bonhoeffer's boundary experiences abroad. It captures well Bonhoeffer's inclination to undergird his observations with theological meaning. This is seen to be a recurrent feature in Bonhoeffer's travel writings. Staats once again remarks on the difficulty of clearly locating the turning: "Es bleibt offen, ob Bonhoeffer damit auch schon eine Erinnerung an seine Romreise 1924 verband. Gewiß sind bleibende Eindrücke, die er in Spanien 1928/29 und America 1930/31 gewann, von dieser Erinnerung nicht ausgeschlossen ..." This is said to be confirmed by a birthday letter to Max Diestel, dated 5 November 1942, in which Bonhoeffer thanks Diestel for encouraging him to go to Barcelona: "Es ist mir bewußt, daß ich ihnen die entscheidenden Anstöße in meinem äußeren, beruflichen und persönlichen Leben verdanke. [...] Es war vielleicht ein einziger telephonischer Anruf – nämlich Dezember 1927 – durch den mein ganzes Denken auf ein Gleis gesetzt worden ist, von dem es nicht mehr heruntergekommen ist und kommen wird."<sup>253</sup> In the same letter he also thanks him for the offer of a scholarship to go to Union Theological Seminary enabling him to experience a year, "das für mich bis heute von größter Bedeutung wurde."<sup>254</sup> Finally – "und vielleicht war das das Entscheidende von allem"<sup>255</sup> – Bonhoeffer mentions Distel's invitation to accompany him to Cambridge for the "Tagung des Weltbundes für internationale

Freundschaftsarbeit der Kirchen" 1931.<sup>256</sup> Summing up all these experiences between 1928 and 1931 he admits to Diestel: "für mich waren sie grundlegend für mein ganzes Leben und meine Lebensgestaltung."<sup>257</sup>

Staats, then, introduces us to three additional remarks by Bonhoeffer which also highlight the importance of those experiences abroad. In fact, he argues, that "in ihnen kann man wie in einem Brennspeigel das Ganze dieser Jahre erkennen. Auch weisen diese wenigen Äußerungen auf bleibendes Ganzes im späteren Werk."<sup>258</sup> While he himself does not connect these themes with Bonhoeffer's comment to the turning, each theme focuses and expands on my study of his turning "vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen". The first theme emerges from a diary note during his 1928 stay in Barcelona where Bonhoeffer early on reflects on his theology becoming "humanistisch".<sup>259</sup> Given Bonhoeffer's particular attraction to Greek mythology as sermon and lecture illustrations Staats explains: "'Humanistische Theologie' – damit ist gerade auch die klassische Antike gemeint, deren offene Fragen durch das Christentum beantwortet werden."<sup>260</sup> Staats especially highlights Bonhoeffer's use of the story of the giant Antäus to propagate a Christianity that is faithful to the earth: "Die von Friedrich Nietzsche geforderte Rezeption der Antike als eine Treue zur Erde wird von Bonhoeffer im Symbol des Antäus ausgeführt zu einem Bild eines erdverbundenen Christentums, das sich an der Inkarnation des Gottes der Christen orientiert und dort zur Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit schlechthin kommt."<sup>261</sup> In the light of Bonhoeffer's positive mentioning of Josef Wittig's *Jesus in Palästina, Schlesien und anderswo*<sup>262</sup> Staats suggests an interpretation of "humanistisch" in terms of a readiness to engage humanity's cultural diversity. This is also reflected in a sermon from Barcelona where Bonhoeffer said: "'An Gottes Güte 'tut sich uns der Blick auf für die ganze Welt'."<sup>263</sup> Hence, Bonhoeffer's humanistic theology is portrayed "als eine auf die ganze Welt in ihrer Geschichte bezogene Theologie"<sup>264</sup> which includes an understanding of "humanistic" in terms of "ecumenical".<sup>265</sup>

Bonhoeffer's second important remark on his experiences abroad is seen in his response when a student from the *Donnerstagkreis* of the Berlin Grunewald Congregation writes back to Bonhoeffer, who is still in New York 1931: "Ich glaube auch, das, was Sie über sich schreiben, verstanden zu haben, vor allem die Erneuerung



ihrer Philosophie und Theologie durch neue Anschauungen.”<sup>266</sup> Staats questions to what extent this can be seen to imply a positive reception of American pragmatism on Bonhoeffer’s side. In view of Bonhoeffer’s study reports to the *Kirchenbundesamt* on his stay at Union Theological Seminary and a letter to Max Diestel<sup>267</sup> Staats interprets the comment as implying an perception of “Verrat der eigentlichen Theologie”.<sup>268</sup> In contrast to von Hase Staats therefore mainly reckons with a learning experience *ex negativo*: “Es ist also ein neues Zurückgeworfensein auf die Theologie in Europa, das Bonhoeffer ausgerechnet der amerikanischen Theologie verdankt.”<sup>269</sup> Only in terms of Bonhoeffer’s experiences of American church life around the themes of ethical responsibility and racism does Staats concede a positive influence nurturing a more ecumenical understanding of the church.<sup>270</sup> In this sense Bonhoeffer’s “humanistic” theology is seen to have been re-inforced by his American experience.

Bonhoeffer’s third important remark came to us during a personal crisis in Cuba at Christmas 1930. Taking his clue from a letter to his fiancée on a hot day in August 1943 Staats highlights the influence the sun had on Bonhoeffer, reminding him, as he puts it himself, “daß der Mensch von der Erde genommen ist und nicht aus Luft und Gedanken besteht.” It is in Cuba that Bonhoeffer confesses of having almost surrendered to the “Sonnenkult” and of having therefore struggled to know what to preach about. And to a certain degree this was a recurrent experience every summer.<sup>271</sup> Staats also refers to another letter to Helmut Rößler, written during this period, “in dem er [Bonhoeffer] von deprimierenden Erfahrungen spricht und die ‘wärmende Nähe von Freunden’ und ‘die Wolke der echten christlichen Zeugen’ vermißt ...” The sermon preached in Havana on the fourth Advent Sunday conveyed something of this experience of personal insecurity addressing the “Unausweichlichkeit der Todeserfahrung”. The sermon’s manuscript on the theme of Moses’ death was incomplete and represented “ein Thema, das Bonhoeffer nicht mehr loslassen sollte, wie das Gefangenschaftsgedicht vom September 1944 zeigt.”<sup>272</sup> Staats’ quote from the sermon strikes us especially in terms of the central symbolism of the journey: “Das Leben des Mose ‘war ein Wandern zur Verheißung, ein Wandern in Hoffnung durch Enttäuschungen, Mühsale, Niederlagen, durch Abfall und Untreue hindurch’. Doch nicht einmal Mose erreicht das gelobte Land, er muß das Vorletzte bis zum bitteren Ende erleben, um zum Letzten zu gelangen: ”“Geh auf den Berg und

stirb!”<sup>273</sup> In the light of Bonhoeffer’s own life journey his attraction to Moses’ tragic death becomes understandable. It is Bonhoeffer’s concern with the “Unausweichlichkeit der Todeserfahrung” that led to an important theological discovery in his lecture on “Theology of Crisis”, written around the time of the crisis in Cuba. It is an theological insight, which “durch die gleiche Gestalt mit dem Todesruf Jesu: ‘Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen’ (Mk 15,34) zur Erkenntnis wirklichen Menschenseins wird.”<sup>274</sup> Drawing also on Bonhoeffer’s prison reflections Staats notes: “Bonhoeffers letzte Gedanken lassen ihn bekanntlich unter Hinweis auf diesen Kreuzesruf formulieren: ‘Der Gott, der mit uns ist, ist der Gott, der uns in der Welt leben läßt ohne die Arbeitshypothese Gott, ist der Gott, vor dem wir dauernd stehen.’” He hence concludes: “Auch dieser Satz mag sich von fernher mit Bonhoeffers ersten Auslandserfahrungen berühren.”<sup>275</sup>

In her article on *Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s American Experiences* Ruth Zerner interprets the “turning” as primarily relating to Bonhoeffer’s American sojourn: “Both American visits were milestones in Bonhoeffer’s odyssey, but according to his 1944 recollections, the first trip probably produced the most significant alterations in his life style ...”<sup>276</sup> Reflecting on these alterations Zerner argues that “The American reality he experienced fashioned a practical pattern for personal and professional growth, while at the same time reconciling and balancing tensions. Without self-conscious planning during 1930/31 a model evolved which shaped and stamped his future contributions.”<sup>277</sup> Bonhoeffer’s turning is hence interpreted as an ongoing pursuit for “wholeness and synthesis” as exhibited by many other Weimar post-World War I intellectuals.<sup>278</sup> The turning is pictured as “a movement merging and harmonizing his thoughts and actions, reason and feelings, ideas and decisions.”<sup>279</sup> It is also presented as a journey of integration towards reconciling the gaps and tensions between “principle and action”, “spontaneous individual action and the needs of disciplined community life” and between “faith and action”.<sup>280</sup> Bonhoeffer’s eventual call to free, responsible action in the *Ethik* and his involvement in the anti-Hitler conspiracy is understood as the climax of this development. Interestingly, in sketching this process Zerner notes how Bonhoeffer was already struck by “the blending of everyday life and religion in the Moslem world” in North Africa in 1924.<sup>281</sup> But she also explains how in Bonhoeffer’s case this search for wholeness of life at the heart

revolved around Christ as the center and the challenge of “the Christ-like life in this world.”<sup>282</sup> His American visits are therefore represented “as stages in the process which ultimately enabled Bonhoeffer to affirm in word and in action that ‘faith is something whole, involving the whole of one’s life. Jesus calls men, not to a new religion, but to life.’”<sup>283</sup> This search for wholeness was nurtured by an experience of boundaries which were not merely geographic: “For a man so sensitive to the edges and limits of human experience, people and places in the United States provided numerous opportunities for stretching and expanding his life in new, unexpected ways. ... The call of and to Christ apparently intensified at the same time that he probed new frontiers of human experience ...”<sup>284</sup>

In this sense Zerner offers another important perspective suggesting the search for wholeness as the key theme for understanding Bonhoeffer’s turning “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen”. But while highlighting the importance of the multiple experiences of boundaries in this search for wholeness, the connection between the two is not further reflected theologically in Bonhoeffer’s early writings. It is, hence, not made clear that Bonhoeffer’s “passion for reality”<sup>285</sup> is christologically rooted in those very experiences of boundaries. Zerner, for example, refers to Bonhoeffer’s reflections on the Spanish bullfight and other fringe experiences he had in Spain in order to illustrate that “Dietrich Bonhoeffer both respected and relished the testing of one’s self against the unfamiliar, the boundaries, the limits of life.”<sup>286</sup> But once again the connection between these unfamiliar boundaries and Christ or “the real” are not reflected at any deeper level thus undermining her argument on “wholeness”. Furthermore by conflating travels to foreign lands and the lifelong exploration of life’s limits, the term “boundary” seems to dissolve into a plethora of meanings. Zerner offers the following list of boundary experiences: “travels to the American side of the Atlantic, Italy, North Africa, Spain, and a fascination with India (experienced, however, only in books); sensitivity to sickness, suffering, death, and suicide (*Ethics*); sexual boundaries and relationships (*Creation and Fall*); art (music, drama, fiction); fringe group adaptations (especially the American blacks); and finally, prayerful contemplation (the arcane discipline).”<sup>287</sup> This raises the question whether Bonhoeffer’s passion for reality, which is regarded as the hallmark of his existence, is adequately expressed by the idea of “becoming incarnate, ... *living* the Christian life

and not merely talking about it ..."<sup>288</sup> In other words, Bonhoeffer's concern with reality cannot be reduced to such a striving for synthesis between thought and action.

Our survey ends with Josiah Ulysses Young's *No difference in the fare: Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the problem of racism*.<sup>289</sup> Examining Bonhoeffer's legacy in terms of racial injustice Young looks at his association with Afro-American culture during his stay in the States. While acknowledging "Bonhoeffer's chauvinism, privilege, and his Eurocentric perspective" Young maintains that they "do not in themselves discount his work ... Neither would the revelation that he was not quite as taken with black as one might think."<sup>290</sup> And yes, even though he "failed to mention Africa at least a couple of times when he considered Asia ..." Young still finds "that persons committed to racial justice, and aware of the significance of Africa-Americans' struggle, can discover, in Bonhoeffer's life and thought, useful theological insights that strengthen one in the struggle against racism."<sup>291</sup> Bonhoeffer's fascination with Harlem and his visits to the Abyssinian Baptist Church leads into a discussion of his major writings in view of "their implications for a racist-free-living..."<sup>292</sup> Bonhoeffer's life and thought witness to a spirit of embracing alterity. Each chapter is set within the context of a specific African-American spiritual which is then interpreted in light of Bonhoeffer's own struggle with "the sinful transgression of limits..."<sup>293</sup> It is an exploration of the implications of Bonhoeffer's theology in terms of the problem of black otherness, focusing specifically on the theme of "the African-beneath-the-Negro".<sup>294</sup>

Extending Bonhoeffer's theology of sociality in relation to the problem of racism Young maintains: "I do not mean that his *Communion of Saints* and *Act and Being* ... addressed the problem specifically. Neither, for that matter, did *The Cost of Discipleship* or *Ethics* ... But how can one miss their implications for racist-free living? ... One sees this clearly in terms of Bonhoeffer's association with African-Americans ... Bonhoeffer tried to embrace, rather than to totalize, in the sense of reject, otherness – alterity."<sup>295</sup> Drawing on Dumas' insights on Bonhoeffer's accent on reality Young concludes that "what is at stake is whether we can live in this world, without illusion, and with a no-holds-barred commitment to one another – for Christ's sake!"<sup>296</sup> For it was through his exposure to Afro-American, Young argues, that

“Bonhoeffer knew such racism had little to do with reality. Reality is born from the mix of cultures, the variance of experiences – to say nothing of the complexities of individuals, who are indispensable to the I-You relationships on which community is based.”<sup>297</sup> It becomes then clear that according to Bonhoeffer “Christian community is nonexistent without alterity.”<sup>298</sup> In fact, “To forfeit community in order to make of one phenotype a master race is an affront to Bonhoeffer’s God, whose very own otherness forbids the kind of ethic that orders existence racist-ly.”<sup>299</sup>

My analysis of Bonhoeffer’s use of the notion of the boundary in tandem with his early journeys has been in parts encouraged by Young’s exploration of the significance of the “barrier” or “limit”<sup>300</sup> in Bonhoeffer’s early writings and its relevance for the problem of racism. The following summary will therefore focus on this particular contribution of Young and not repeat what has already been mentioned by others about Bonhoeffer’s early writings. Young begins by looking at *Sanctorum Communio* in order to highlight how social philosophies do not know what it means to be a person, or to be in relationships with other persons. Bonhoeffer’s Christian philosophy in contrast “entails a *barrier* – which is at once the alien subject’s incontrovertible uniqueness and the refusal to try to domesticate such uniqueness.”<sup>301</sup> The “barrier” is perceived to be of a specifically ethical character. Therefore only “in the ethical sphere, then – where one does or does not respect differences – does life with the mysterious Other become reality, or illusion.”<sup>302</sup> Bonhoeffer’s life in Harlem is thereby seen to be a witness to how “The *imago Dei* is the holiness of a person and the sanctity of the I-Thou community of which he or she is a part.”<sup>303</sup> Highlighting the particular friendship between Frank Fisher and Bonhoeffer, Young maintains, that “their friendship thrived in Harlem because of their openness to each other’s uniqueness – an openness based on the mystery, the closedness, of the Other. In short, one has to be a healthy, as in a non-bigoted, person to see the Other as a gift, as one who is *necessary* for one’s *own* – as in enclosed – well-being.”<sup>304</sup>

Young then continues to examine *Akt und Sein* in view of the “barrier”, more specifically in terms of Bonhoeffer’s distinction between the *actus directus* and the *actus reflexus*. Building on the difference between prereflective consciousness and reflective consciousness<sup>305</sup> Young emphasizes that the *actus directus* is presented by

Bonhoeffer as that initial response of direct consciousness in an event of encounter.<sup>306</sup>

In clarifying the moment of the *actus directus* he explains:

Not unlike the way one is riveted to the spirited music created at the spur of the moment in jazz improvisation – yet must be content with only the memory of the startling experience – the *actus directus* dissipates after the occasion is over. One, in reflecting upon the occasion during which such immediacy was experienced, is faced with the absence of that event itself.<sup>307</sup>

He therefore argues that whether one loves the Thou “has everything to do with whether one understands the barrier between act and being. For act entails how we relate to others and how we relate, therefore, to God – how open we are to the wide scope of being that has been given to us.”<sup>308</sup> As a consequence the direct consciousness of the “other” is seen to be far more important than reflection on consciousness, “for that *actus directus* will bear on how one lives: How did one look at this “other” in the first place; what was arresting about this “other”?”<sup>309</sup> The importance of these observations are all the more critical “when act abuses being in racist intentions. One sees clearly then the significance of Bonhoeffer’s view that ‘the meaning of epistemology is anthropology.’”<sup>310</sup> Young continues to wonder along those lines: “Can one enjoy human being fully if the epistemologies that deign to define humankind stem from exceedingly narrow acts?”<sup>311</sup> Young then concludes: “All depends on whether there has been an *actus directus* in reference to God’s Thou, and in turn to the Thou of the neighbor – his or her ‘race’ notwithstanding. Only then – because of ‘a divinely created faith’ – would there be the communion of I and I, as well as act and being ...”<sup>312</sup>

And yet, according to Bonhoeffer there is something religious about our theologies. For “everything is accessible to reflection only in reflection – therefore faith only as ‘faith-wishfulness’.”<sup>313</sup> And it is this reality which “keeps the faithful humble; on the move, *leaning on the Lord*. For there was an encounter – however ineffable now – between God and the believer; and that is the foundation of all we say and do in relation to God.”<sup>314</sup> In assimilating Bonhoeffer’s legacy Young then argues: “When Christ ... is the Thou of the *actus directus*, the non-being of such racist acts is

replaced with the being of community, for one sees 'only Christ, as ... Lord and ... God.' And that means we see 'in one and the same act, the risen and crucified *in* [our] neighbor and in creation ...'"<sup>315</sup> And yet, Young concludes, "what gives more credibility to his [Bonhoeffer's] witness than his scholarship (*actus reflexus*) was his hands-on experience (*actus directus*) with African-Americans."<sup>316</sup>

Considering Bonhoeffer's Christology lectures Young then continues to point out how "Bonhoeffer implies in *Christ the Center* that God and sociality go together: The extent to which one can be content with God's ultimate alterity is the extent to which one can be content to live with others different from oneself."<sup>317</sup> The reason given is that "Christ assumes the form of the other's enigma, stands before her in that sense – in the middle of I and Thou – and commands that one ask who and not how. Who, then, means that "it is only from God that [one] knows who he is. God alone frees one from the prison of the Same."<sup>318</sup> In looking at *Gemeinsames Leben* it becomes clear furthermore that there can never be any immediate relationship of one to another: "One who seeks such immediacy violates the Other in refusing to grant him or her agapic space – the Other is invaded through the coveting of the Same."<sup>319</sup> It is finally in the *Ethik* that it once again becomes clear: "Diversity, manifold otherness, is reality. For 'to be conformed with the Incarnate is to have the right to be the [person] one really is.' Within such diversity each is permitted to be him or herself ..." <sup>320</sup> But Young's comments also include some criticism in view of the *Ethik*:

Bonhoeffer thought no Western nation could afford to ignore German idolatry because 'the form of Christ [was] the unity of the Western nations' ... Bonhoeffer succumbed here to a Western chauvinism that credits historical consciousness to Europe alone. He thought Asia looked in a Hindu-like 'timelessness' or a Japanese-style ancestor deification, and mentioned Africa not at all ... One wonders how to weigh that, as Bonhoeffer argued on other occasions that the West was too decadent to be trusted with the Christian heritage.<sup>321</sup>

Young closes with reflecting on Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity, emphasizing that true worldliness and racism are at odds and that religionless includes revelling in alterity. For "the religionless Christian will live in the real world, discovering its

blessedness in the Other.”<sup>322</sup> And therefore “when it comes to the problem of racism, when it comes to religionlessness that embraces what the West has considered as untouchable, Africa comes to the fore.”<sup>323</sup> In line with African theologians such as Engelbert Mveng, Jean-Marc Éla, Mercy Oduyoye, and Kā Mana, Young finally asks: “Is there a better, perhaps the word is *worse*, place than Africa to appreciate why before God and with God, we live without God?”<sup>324</sup>

Young’s reading of Bonhoeffer’s encounter with the Afro-Americans and his theological wrestling with genuine sociality illustrate Bonhoeffer’s relevance for discussing the problem of racism. Young’s particular focus on Bonhoeffer’s visits to Harlem and on his notion of the “barrier” resonate with my own focus on Bonhoeffer’s “theology geography”. In particular his reading of Bonhoeffer’s distinction between the *actus directus* and *reflexus* in light of the problem of racism is very illuminating. While Young then manages to highlight the profound connections between boundary, alterity and reality, he does not explicitly refer to Bonhoeffer’s comment of having turned “vom Phraseologischen zum Wirklichen” during his early journeys. But his treatment of Bonhoeffer’s understanding of the “barrier” throughout his writings does adequately acknowledge, that there is a development of thought which in itself illustrates the struggle to imagine a genuine boundary.

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 1966, translated by Alex. A. Morrison (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 317.

<sup>2</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 316.

<sup>3</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 168.

<sup>4</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 167.

<sup>5</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 170.

<sup>6</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 173.

<sup>7</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 173.

<sup>8</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 173.

<sup>9</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 175.

<sup>10</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 175.

<sup>11</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 176.

<sup>12</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 176.

<sup>13</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 183.



- <sup>14</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 183.
- <sup>15</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 184.
- <sup>16</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 192.
- <sup>17</sup> Ott refers to the following letters: May 15, 1943; June 14, 1943; September 5, 1943. Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 194.
- <sup>18</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 194.
- <sup>19</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 194.
- <sup>20</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 194.
- <sup>21</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 194.
- <sup>22</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 226.
- <sup>23</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 228.
- <sup>24</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 319.
- <sup>25</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 320.
- <sup>26</sup> "It is not the reality of God in which the young students' chaplain has lost confidence, but the manner in which we have traditionally, and perhaps inevitably, been accustomed to speak of this reality. Is it possible that we have come to the end of our tradition? Can it be in another distant world, and in a quite other foreign form, that the same God and Lord will now have to be truly experienced and preached more credibly to humanity in the future." Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 320.
- <sup>27</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 190-91.
- <sup>28</sup> Ott, *Reality and Faith. The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 191.
- <sup>29</sup> Clifford Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1972), 28. Green notes that for example Ott's "incarnational-ontological Christology severely compromises Bonhoeffer's radical *theologia crucis* as this begins to emerge in the earlier writings and comes to fruition in the *Letters*." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 29.
- <sup>30</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 29.
- <sup>31</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 29-30.
- <sup>32</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 29-30.
- <sup>33</sup> Dumas points out that "It was Ebeling who first made the point [of Bonhoeffer's theology being a theology of reality], stressing in a remarkable way that this insistence on reality, even more than on truth or freedom, had in some respects a medieval emphasis." André Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 1968, translated by Robert McAfee Brown (SCM Press, 1971), 36.
- <sup>34</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 168.
- <sup>35</sup> Dumas points out that "there has hardly ever been a theological era that has felt more strongly the necessity (with Barth) of a God who is more than the mere repetition of man's inner yearnings, and the necessity (with Bultmann) of being able to *speak* about a God who is more than a religious "object" far removed from man's ability to understand and his very ability to be Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 15.
- <sup>36</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 15.
- <sup>37</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 16.
- <sup>38</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 20.
- <sup>39</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 22.
- <sup>40</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 22.
- <sup>41</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 22.
- <sup>42</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 22.
- <sup>43</sup> See (DBW 8: 401ff)
- <sup>44</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 22.
- <sup>45</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 27.
- <sup>46</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 28.
- <sup>47</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 31.
- <sup>48</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 31.
- <sup>49</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 31.
- <sup>50</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 31.
- <sup>51</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 31.

- <sup>52</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 32.
- <sup>53</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 32.
- <sup>54</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 31.
- <sup>55</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 35.
- <sup>56</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 36.
- <sup>57</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 36.
- <sup>58</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 168.
- <sup>59</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 38.
- <sup>60</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 37.
- <sup>61</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 42.
- <sup>62</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 46.
- <sup>63</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 46.
- <sup>64</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 46.
- <sup>65</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 46.
- <sup>66</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 47.
- <sup>67</sup> According to Dumas Bonhoeffer's reflections on the American scene, entitled "Protestantism Without Reformation" "offered an evaluation of the secularity of the state and its clear separation from the church, the vitality of the denominations, the church's sense of social responsibility, the openness of everyone to personal questions, the practical ecumenism on the American scene, and the agreements that were possible on many issues without pompousness or bathos. But he also feared for the truth when it became so vague and sentimental, and for a church that could so easily be transformed into a social club and a family gathering place without theological rigor or even the need for any commitment of faith. Thus at many points American Christianity seemed to him the opposite of what he had known of German (and European) Christianity, where doctrinal precision was all-important, but where the experience of the "communion of saints" was losing ground." Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 47.
- <sup>68</sup> André Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," in *A Bonhoeffer Legacy: Essays in Understanding*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 258-67.
- <sup>69</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 258.
- <sup>70</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 259.
- <sup>71</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 260.
- <sup>72</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 260.
- <sup>73</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 260.
- <sup>74</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 261.
- <sup>75</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 262.
- <sup>76</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 262-63.
- <sup>77</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 264.
- <sup>78</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 264.
- <sup>79</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 264.
- <sup>80</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 265.
- <sup>81</sup> See Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 266.
- <sup>82</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 265.
- <sup>83</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 265.
- <sup>84</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 266.
- <sup>85</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 267.
- <sup>86</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 267.
- <sup>87</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 267.
- <sup>88</sup> Dumas, "Religion and Reality in the Work of Bonhoeffer," 267.
- <sup>89</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 168.
- <sup>90</sup> Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 168.
- <sup>91</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933, 36.
- <sup>92</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933, 36.
- <sup>93</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933, 36.
- <sup>94</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933, 36.
- <sup>95</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933, 37.
- <sup>96</sup> Michael Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 1.

- <sup>97</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 5.
- <sup>98</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 5.
- <sup>99</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 5.
- <sup>100</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 5.
- <sup>101</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 4.
- <sup>102</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 6.
- <sup>103</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 49.
- <sup>104</sup> But Weinrich is also aware that Feil discerns "einen sachlichen Sprung" between these two writings. See Ernst Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 4., Durchges. und Durch ein 2. Nachwort Ergänzte Aufl. (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 38f.
- <sup>105</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 213.
- <sup>106</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>107</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 252.
- <sup>108</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 252.
- <sup>109</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 252.
- <sup>110</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>111</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 252.
- <sup>112</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 252.
- <sup>113</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 222.
- <sup>114</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 222.
- <sup>115</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 222.
- <sup>116</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 253.
- <sup>117</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>118</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>119</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256.
- <sup>120</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 256-57.
- <sup>121</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 257.
- <sup>122</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 257.
- <sup>123</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 255.
- <sup>124</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 255. Weinrich's appraisal of Bonhoeffer's concept of reality includes a critical look at some of

the systematic implications of his approach, as for example "das Koinzidenzverhältnis von Heiligem Geist und historisch-menschlichem Geist". Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 258. More important is Weinrich's problematization of how "die soziologische Betrachtung durch idealistisch geprägte Kategorien vorgenommen wird". Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 259. The result is seen to be ambivalent: "Bonhoeffer [entgeht] einerseits der Gefahr der Identifizierung der empirischen Gestalt der Kirche mit ihrer Wirklichkeit, beraubt sich aber andererseits der Möglichkeit, hier eine kritische Differenz zu beschreiben, da er an die empirische Gestalt im Grunde doch nicht recht herankommt, sondern nur eine formale Sanktion dem Faktischen erteilt, ohne dieses nun noch differenzieren zu können. So verhindert die unklare soziologische Begrifflichkeit auch die Diskussion des systematischen Problems der Valenz soziologischer Aussagen im Rahmen der Theologie." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 259. As a consequence "bleibt auch die Gemeinschaft bei Bonhoeffer im letzten Sinne wieder in sich undifferenziert, wie es vorher ausdrücklich beim Idealismus beklagt wurde, nur mit der vielleicht nicht unerheblichen Modifikation, daß ihre Einheit durch Geistvielfalt konstituiert ist. Doch diese Geistvielfalt vermag sich in der Gemeinschaft nicht zur Geltung zu bringen." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 260. And yet Weinrich argues: "Das Erlebnis kapituliert im Grunde vor der systematisch konzipierten Gemeinschaft, indem es sich systematisch nicht einzubringen vermag. Erst durch die Deutung von der Gemeinschaft aus wird es zu einer integrierbaren Erfahrung." Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 260.

<sup>125</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.

<sup>126</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.

<sup>127</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.

<sup>128</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.

<sup>129</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 261.

<sup>130</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>131</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>132</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>133</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>134</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>135</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>136</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262.

<sup>137</sup> Weinrich, *Der Wirklichkeit Begegnen. Studien zu Buber, Grisebach, Gogarten, Bonhoeffer und Hirsch*, 262-63.

<sup>138</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 86.

<sup>139</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 86.

<sup>140</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 90.

<sup>141</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 90.

<sup>142</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 99.

<sup>143</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 29.

<sup>144</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 29.

<sup>145</sup> Feil explains: "Diese Polemik gegen einen positivistisch-empirischen Wirklichkeitsbegriff widerspricht insofern nicht der bes. in AS getroffenen Bezeichnung der Theologie als 'positive Wissenschaft', als die Theologie über das in der Geschichte geoffenbarte Geheimnis, nämlich Gott in

Jesus Christus, nachdenkt in dem in der Offenbarung mitgegebenen Wissen, Gott nicht durchdenken zu können und daher die 'geoffenbarte Religion' nicht in die 'offenbare Religion' (Hegel) aufheben zu können. Hierlin liegt die 'antiidealistische' Spitze der Theologie Bonhoeffers, die die Bezeichnung der Theologie als 'positiv' rechtfertigt. Wenn Bonhoeffer nun seinen Wirklichkeitsbegriff gegen einen positivistisch-empirischen Wirklichkeitsbegriff abhebt, so versteht er darunter nicht unmittelbar die Position eines wissenschaftstheoretischen 'Positivismus', wie er heute etwa von K. Popper und H. Albert vertreten und in der Soziologie heftig diskutiert wird ... . Daß Bonhoeffer, der sich gegen 'Metaphysik' in dem oben ... genannten Sinn absetzt, dennoch auch vom Positivismus her kritisch infrage gestellt würde, wurde schon gesagt. Es ist zwar keine Abwehr dieses Angriffs wohl aber ein Zeichen der Kompliziertheit der Situation, daß von seiten der Frankfurter Schule gegen den Positivismus der Vorwurf des Szientismus erhoben wird ... Bonhoeffer würde zwischen die Fronten geraten, da er einerseits manchen Anlaß gibt zum Vorwurf des Fideismus, Aktualismus oder ekklesiologischen Positivismus und andererseits zum Vorwurf des vorkritischen Irrationalismus." Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 86-87, footnote 1.

<sup>146</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 86-87.

<sup>147</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 87.

<sup>148</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 28.

<sup>149</sup> Feil hereby refers to Bonhoeffer's *Ethik*.

<sup>150</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 87.

<sup>151</sup> Feil, *Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers. Hermeneutik, Christologie, Weltverständnis*, 87.

<sup>152</sup> This is in fact the heading of Bethge's chapter in question. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 1967, 8 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 246.

<sup>153</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 247.

<sup>154</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 246-47.

<sup>155</sup> And according to Bethge there are good reasons for it: "Die Ernsthaftigkeit seiner Entschlüsse bewährte sich gerade darin, daß er sie eben nicht mehr zum Gegenstand der Beobachtung oder des Erzählens machte ... Ja, er konnte sehr prononciert vor einem Erwarten oder Fixieren des 'Berufungserlebnisses' warnen: 'Nicht ein Berufungserlebnis, sondern Bereitschaft zu nüchterner, ernster, verantwortlicher theologischer Arbeit steht am Eingang des theologischen Studiums', schrieb er 1933 in ein Merkblatt für Studenten." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 247.

<sup>156</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 247.

<sup>157</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 247.

<sup>158</sup> Referring to the kind of changes one of Bonhoeffer's friends from his stay in New York, Paul Lehmann, noticed on his visit to Berlin 1933, Bethge explains: "Für die Studenten schien es immer so gewesen zu sein; Bonhoeffer ging jetzt regelmäßig zur Kirche, während Lehmann in New York gerade aufgefallen war, wie frei er es damit hielt. Er unterzog sich einem vom exegetisch-homiletischen Gebrauch der Schrift deutlich unterschiedenen meditativen Umgang mit der Bibel. Auf den Freizeiten des Jahres 1932 wunderten sich seine Studenten sehr über diese ungewohnte Übung und ließen es an ironischen Bemerkungen darüber nicht fehlen. Er sprach von der Beichte nicht mehr nur theologisch, sondern als von einem Akt, der auch tatsächlich zu vollziehen sei. Das kannte man im eigenen kirchlichen und akademischen Umkreis nicht. Immer häufiger spielte er auf ein gemeinschaftliches Leben in Gehorsam und Gebet an, durch welches das individualistisch isolierte und privilegierte Pfarramt vielleicht eine Erneuerung seiner Glaubwürdigkeit erfahren könnte; und so etwas nun nicht entgegen reformatorischer Theologie, sondern aus ihr begründet. Mehr und mehr zog Bonhoeffer die Bergpredigt heran und zwar als ein Wort, das gesagt sei, nicht um es als Spiegel zu benutzen, sondern um es zu tun. Mit einem Mal trat Bonhoeffer unter Studenten und Pfarrern auch für einen christlichen Pazifismus ein - kaum einer hörte damals darauf. Bonhoeffers Frömmigkeit konnte seinen Studenten in manchen Augenblicken fast zu drängerisch werden; sie blieb nur deshalb eindrucklich, weil sie von theologischer Strenge und einem weiten Kulturverstand umgeben war." Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 247-48.

<sup>159</sup> Bonhoeffer writes to her: "Ich stürzte mich in die Arbeit in sehr unchristlicher Weise. Ein ... Ehrgeiz, den manche an mir gemerkt haben, machte mir das Leben schwer ... Dann kam etwas anderes, etwas was mein Leben bis heute verändert und herumgeworfen hat. Ich kam zum ersten Mal zur Bibel ... Ich hatte schon oft gepredigt, ich hatte schon viel von der Kirche gesehen, darüber geredet und geschrieben - und ich war noch kein Christ geworden ... Ich weiß, ich habe damals aus der Sache Jesu Christi einen Vorteil für mich selbst ... gemacht. Ich bitte Gott, daß das nie wieder so kommt. Ich hatte auch nie, oder doch sehr wenig gebetet. Ich war bei aller Verlassenheit ganz froh an mir selbst. Daraus hat mich die

Bibel befreit und insbesondere die Bergpredigt. Seitdem ist alles anders geworden. Das habe ich deutlich gespürt und sogar andere Menschen um mich herum. Das war eine große Befreiung. Da wurde es mir klar, daß das Leben eines Diener Jesu Christi der Kirche gehören muß und Schritt für Schritt wurde es deutlicher, wie weit das so sein muß. Dann kam die Not von 1933. Das hat mich darin bestärkt. Ich fand nun auch Menschen, die dieses Ziel mit mir ins Auge faßten. Es lag mir nun alles an der Erneuerung der Kirche und des Pfarrerstandes ... Der christliche Pazifismus, den ich noch kurz vorher - bei der Disputation, auf der auch Gerhard (Jacobi, d. Vf.) war - leidenschaftlich bekämpft hatte, ging mir auf einmal als Selbstverständlichkeit auf. Und so ging es weiter, Schritt für Schritt. Ich sah und dachte gar nichts anderes mehr ... " Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Finkenwalde 1935-1937*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Otto Dudzus, et al., vol. 14 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1996), 112-13.

<sup>160</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 248.

<sup>161</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *London 1932-1933*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Goedeking, Martin Heimbucher and Hans-Walter Schleicher, vol. 13 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1994), 272. See also Bonhoeffer's letter to his brother-in-law Rüdiger Schleicher in Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Finkenwalde 1935-1937*, 144f.

<sup>162</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 250.

<sup>163</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 250.

<sup>164</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 250.

<sup>165</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 247.

<sup>166</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 145-234.

<sup>167</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 45.

<sup>168</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 39.

<sup>169</sup> Green sees the following progression of thought from *Sanctorum Communio* to *Akt und Sein*: "In integrating the rightful claims of actualistic and ontological schools of philosophy and theology, Bonhoeffer employs and refines the basic conceptuality of sociality developed in the first book; he develops it further on the ontological side, but this is a personal and communal ontology concerned with concrete human relationships and with the role of 'consciousness' and 'conscience' within them." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 39.

<sup>170</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 1.

<sup>171</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 38.

<sup>172</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 38.

<sup>173</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 38.

<sup>174</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 147. Green distinguishes between two basic themes in the long and complex history of the concept of power: "The one refers to capacity, ability, capability, and efficacy; it stresses potency in contrast to impotence. ... The other ... has synonyms like authority, dominion, control, command, might, and force." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 147.

<sup>175</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 148.

<sup>176</sup> Green explains: "'Self' is commonly used as the comprehensive term in psychological literature. Some theorists use it as virtually equivalent to other integrative concepts like personality and identity. Some differentiate self and ego, as we do here in line with the psychoanalytic tradition, regarding self as the comprehensive category and ego as a sub-category; others use self and ego interchangeably. ... It is not our purpose to debate these theoretical and terminological problems, but to clarify our own usage and to indicate it is consistent with a substantial body of psychological thought." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 208-09, endnote 10.

<sup>177</sup> These activities of the self include "the rational analysis and organization of the natural world and the human social environment, as in science, technology, social and personal planning; deliberate willing toward specified goals; reflection on past and present experience, and mental projection of future activities; calculating the consequences of behavior; conscious regulation of emotional and instinctual self-expression; problem solving; intellectual activities throughout the range of human experience; synthesizing perceptions and data; conscious decision making, judgment, and evaluation. ... All these activities contribute to autonomy, competence, and mastery in personal life Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 148-49.

<sup>178</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 149. Green further clarifies these distinctions: "... we [do not] imply that the ego is the sole seat of power, as it were, in the self. We do not deny the power of instinctual drives, on the one hand, or the power of the superego on the other; with respect to the superego, it is evident that both the pressure of an accusing conscience (negative superego) and the claim of the positive conscience (superego as ego-ideal) can generate great energy and power for good and for ill." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 149.

<sup>179</sup> Green, of course, recognizes that Bonhoeffer "no more provides us with this analytical conceptuality than he explicitly announces power as the focus for his soteriology." He therefore maintains: "We will present evidence showing that the conceptuality is appropriate and elucidating. In reply to the possible objection that the use of certain categories from the psychoanalytic tradition is quite alien to Bonhoeffer himself and also to the psychiatric approach of his father, the following observations are pertinent. First, the reader is referred to Appendix E (in the microfilm version of this work), "Preliminary Note on Karl Bonhoeffer's Attitude to Psychoanalysis"; this corrects the common but erroneous view that his attitude was 'antagonistic.' Second, Chapter VI includes discussion of the similarities between Dietrich Bonhoeffer's critique of religion and that of Freud. Further, the discussion shows that, all unbeknown to Bonhoeffer himself, his theology has considerable significance for problems in Freud's anthropology and views of human society. These similarities and differences are uncovered and illuminated by the use of certain psychoanalytic concepts. Third, it is quite legitimate methodologically to use for heuristic purposes categories not employed by a given thinker himself, so long as his writings contain evidence demonstrating the appropriateness of the categories." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 209, endnote 11.

<sup>180</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 149.

<sup>181</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 149.

<sup>182</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 2.

<sup>183</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 150.

<sup>184</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 150.

<sup>185</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 151.

<sup>186</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 151.

<sup>187</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 152.

<sup>188</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 152.

<sup>189</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 152.

<sup>190</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 152.

<sup>191</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 153.

<sup>192</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 153.

<sup>193</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 153.

<sup>194</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 153.

<sup>195</sup> The reflection is a memoir, which according to Bethge reveals the ambitiousness involved in Bonhoeffer's adolescent decision to be a theologian. Green once again emphasizes the remarkable congruity with the previous passages: "The power of the ego, with its achievements of knowledge, ideals, understanding, impressive speech, determination, and will power; the superiority over others, leading to the scene of glorious victory, defeating the enemies of self and God; the violation of sociality in dominant self-assertion and rejection of the un-needed others; and the internal self-accusations of

conscience whose voice is subordinated to self-assertion and self-justification, finally to die away." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 157. According to Green "Even the metaphors – especially the ego in the center, the silence of solitariness – are identical to those recurring in the theological writings. Here is a man with godlike power, ostensibly God's conquering hero on earth, but in actuality an egocentric student of Schiller's advice." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 157.

<sup>196</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 158.

<sup>197</sup> Green points out: "Not internal guilt with its hatred of God and self, and its compulsive, unsatisfying works, but power over others and the loss of mutual love in community – that is the crux of Bonhoeffer's soteriological problem." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 159.

<sup>198</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 159.

<sup>199</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 160. In *Sanctorum Communio* the problem is seen to arise with sin, "which perverts the original function of rational, purposive associations (Gesellschaft). When the evil will is operative, such associations become 'institutions of systematic exploitation of one man by another.'" Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 160.

<sup>200</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 161.

<sup>201</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 161.

<sup>202</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 2.

<sup>203</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 3.

<sup>204</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 172.

<sup>205</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 173.

<sup>206</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 173.

<sup>207</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 173. In April 1936, Bonhoeffer writes to his brother-in-law Rüdiger Schleicher, who saw himself more in the tradition of Harnack and Naumann. Once again it is the bible that is described to help resist the temptation of one's own "divine counterpart": "Ist es Dir nun ... verständlich, wenn ich die Bibel als dieses fremde Wort Gottes an keinem Punkt preisgeben will, daß ich vielmehr mit allen Kräften danach frage, was Gott hier zu uns sagen will? Jeder andere Ort außer der Bibel ist mir zu ungewiß geworden. Ich fürchte, dort nur auf einen göttlichen Doppelgänger von mir selbst zu stoßen ... ." Bonhoeffer, *Illegale Theologenausbildung: Finkenwalde 1935-1937*, 146-47.

<sup>208</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 225.

<sup>209</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 40.

<sup>210</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 224.

<sup>211</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 224.

<sup>212</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 225.

<sup>213</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 175-76.

<sup>214</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 179.

<sup>215</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 179-80.

<sup>216</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 201.



<sup>217</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 205. Green draws our attention to an important distinction: "The ego described by Bonhoeffer and embodied in himself, is strong. Knowledge, education, intellectual acuteness, strength and confidence of will, creativity, mastery – these are the salient qualities in the picture he draws. They obviously presuppose the secure status and impressive achievement of the cultured German intelligentsia to which he and his family belonged, and whose philosophical tradition Bonhoeffer engaged in his writings. That he consciously stood within this aristocratic tradition, and that he admired its strengths as fully as he acknowledged its weaknesses, is absolutely clear from the people portrayed and sentiments expressed in his literary efforts in prison. Bonhoeffer needed no tutoring on the dangers and corruptions of power based upon great personal strengths. But he was conscious of the difference between such power, and the power which is rooted in frustration and weakness that was such a conspicuous phenomenon in the German society of his time." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 166.

<sup>218</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 203.

<sup>219</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 235.

<sup>220</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 202.

<sup>221</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 202.

<sup>222</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 203.

<sup>223</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 204.

<sup>224</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 221.

<sup>225</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 221.

<sup>226</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 221, endnote 81. Green explains how "the family embodied and cultivated qualities of individual independence in common solidarity; relations between individual persons were like those described in Bonhoeffer's theological concept of the person existing in socio-ethical relations; a sense of corporate responsibility for society and history was highly developed in the family as a whole and its individual members; and an impressive array of strengths of mind and will were expected and nurtured." Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 221, endnote 81.

<sup>227</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 225, endnote 94.

<sup>228</sup> Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927-1933*, 207, endnote 1.

<sup>229</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Christian Gremmels and Renate Bethge Eberhard Bethge, vol. 8 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 397, footnote 3.

<sup>230</sup> Sabine Leibholz, "Kindheit und Elternhaus," in *Begegnungen mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1964), 15f. Bethge also quotes this passage in his description of the father. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, 37.

<sup>231</sup> Jürgen Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein"* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, Gütersloher Verlag-Haus, 1999), 21.

<sup>232</sup> Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein"*, 20.

<sup>233</sup> Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein"*, 21.

<sup>234</sup> Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein"*, 21.

- <sup>235</sup> Boomgaarden hereby argues against the approach in which phraseology "... -von Bethge nicht beabsichtigt - geradezu zum Signum des frühen Bonhoeffer gemacht wurde und die vorurteilsfreie Rezeption der Universitätschriften Bonhoeffers gehemmt haben könnte." Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffers Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein,"* 20.
- <sup>236</sup> Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffers Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein,"* 21.
- <sup>237</sup> Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffers Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein,"* 21.
- <sup>238</sup> Boomgaarden, *Das Verständnis der Wirklichkeit. Dietrich Bonhoeffers Systematische Theologie und Ihr Philosophischer Hintergrund in "Akt und Sein,"* 21.
- <sup>239</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Hans Christoph von Hase in co-operation with Holger Roggelin and Matthias Wünsche Reinhardt Staats, vol. 10 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 588-602.
- <sup>240</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 588.
- <sup>241</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 588.
- <sup>242</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 592.
- <sup>243</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 592.
- <sup>244</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 593. Von Hase lists Karl Barth, Friedrich Gogarten, Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Heidegger, Erich Przywara and Eduard Grisebach.
- <sup>245</sup> Von Hase also mentions Franz Hildebrandts "EST. Das lutherische Prinzip"(1931) and his own work "Die Gegenwart Christi in der Kirche"(1933). Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 593.
- <sup>246</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 592-93.
- <sup>247</sup> See also Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 378.
- <sup>248</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 594.
- <sup>249</sup> Bonhoeffer is said to have struggled to find Christ's presence "in den Kirchen Amerikas, in denen z.T. von Christus und seinem Opfertod nicht mehr die Rede war ... Frömmigkeit war Privatsache und die Gemeinschaft ein Angebot zur frommen Geselligkeit. Daß diese Gemeinden Jesus Christus, den Gekreuzigten und Auferstandenen, real darstellten, forderte einen starken Glauben, der dem liberalen theologischen Denken widersprach. Der Mangel an christologischer Substanz in der Verkündigung Amerikas schockierte Bonhoeffer tief, wie sein Abschlußbericht ausweist. Nichtsdestoweniger hat ihn das Engagement derselben Gemeinden – wie auch das der Studenten – in den diakonischen Aktivitäten der Riesenstadt New York doch nachdenklich gemacht. Im Seminary gingen die Ethiker Ward und Niebuhr auf die 'Ethischen [und theologischen] Probleme der modernen Literatur' ein, und Professor Webber führte sein Seminar wöchentlich in einen der sozialen Brennpunkte und seine Hilfseinrichtungen, die Christen, Juden oder Chinesen in Gang hielten. Zeigte sich auch hier der Christus praesens?" Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 594-95.
- <sup>250</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 595.
- <sup>251</sup> "Die Erkenntnis, daß die Negerfrage ein Prüfstein für Glauben und Glaubwürdigkeit der Kirche sei, hat Bonhoeffer nicht wieder losgelassen. Sie bereitete ihn vor, die Bekennende Kirche nach 1933 zum Eintreten für die verfolgten Juden einschließlich der Nichtgetauften aufzurufen und sich selbst unter großen Risiken für die Rettung einzelner einzusetzen." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 595.
- <sup>252</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 601.
- <sup>253</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Jorgen Glenthoj, Ulrich Kabitz and Wolf Krötke, vol. 16 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1996), 366.
- <sup>254</sup> But Staats argues: "Bezüglich des zweiten Telefonats irrte sich Bonhoeffer allerdings, denn aus einer handschriftlichen Randnotiz im oben erwähnten Brief Mehnerts vom 10.März 1930 geht hervor, daß Bonhoeffer spätestens am 14.März 1930 vom Kirchenbundesamt über die Zusage des Union Theological Seminary informiert wurde." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 636.
- <sup>255</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, 366.
- <sup>256</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, 366, footnote 3.
- <sup>257</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Konspiration und Haft: 1940-1945*, 366.
- <sup>258</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 629.
- <sup>259</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 629.
- <sup>260</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 629-30.

- <sup>261</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 630.
- <sup>262</sup> Part 1 and 2 published in Gotha 1927.
- <sup>263</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 630-31. Staats quotes Bonhoeffer's sermon on Romans 11:6 in Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 455f.
- <sup>264</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 629.
- <sup>265</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 631.
- <sup>266</sup> See letter of Victor Goldschmidt to Bonhoeffer in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Nachlaß Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1987), C 20.
- <sup>267</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 221.
- <sup>268</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 632.
- <sup>269</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 632.
- <sup>270</sup> "Nun ist interessant zu sehen, wie Bonhoeffer in der 'Ethik' aufgrund amerikanischer Erfahrungen gegenüber einer neulutherischen Tradition die 'Grenzen' der Berufsethik offenhalten will; denn 'die Verantwortung im Beruf folgt allein dem Ruf Christi'. Auffallend dabei ist auch, wie Bonhoeffer dem Aufruf des europäischen Philosophen Friedrich Nietzsche nicht nur, wie gezeigt, in der Treue zur Erde, sondern auch im Gebot der 'Fernsten-Liebe' nun ein überraschend christliches Gewicht gibt. So waren die in Amerika gewonnenen neuen theologischen Anschauungen, die er in der Auseinandersetzung mit der europäischen Tradition zu vertiefen suchte, vor allem hervorgerufen durch kirchliche Erfahrungen. Die Erinnerung, daß er nur in der Kirche der Schwarzen das Evangelium hat predigen hören, bleibt fortan unauslöschbar. Der in Barcelona erfahrene Aufbruch zu einem ökumenischen Kirchenbegriff geht folglich in Amerika weiter und verstärkt sich. Denn das Evangelium muß gerade in der Kirche seine Radikalität behalten, damit die Diskriminierung ferner Völker und Rassen aufhört." Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 632-33. Staats refers in this context to Bonhoeffer's discussion of the "Scottsboro" case in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethik*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, ed. Ilse Tödt, et al., vol. 6 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1992), 296.
- <sup>271</sup> Von Bismarck and Kabbitz, *Braubriefe* Zelle 92, 42.
- <sup>272</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 634.
- <sup>273</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 634. Staats explains: "Schon im ersten Barcelona-Vortrag 'Die Tragödie des Prophetentums und ihr bleibender Sinn' war diese alttestamentliche Wahrheit im Prophetenwort Jeremia 45 als etwas christlich Bleibendes hervorgehoben: 'Siehe, was ich gebaut habe, verheere ich, und was ich gepflanzt habe, reiße ich aus, und du, Jeremias, wolltest Großes für dich begehren.' Im Gefängnis wird Bonhoeffer darauf zurückkommen: Wir wollen 'unser fragmentarisches Leben nicht beklagen, sondern daran sogar froh werden. Jeremia 45 läßt mich nicht mehr los ...' Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 634.
- <sup>274</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 634-35.
- <sup>275</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, America: 1928-1931*, 634-35.
- <sup>276</sup> Ruth Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* XXXI, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 263.
- <sup>277</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 263.
- <sup>278</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 261.
- <sup>279</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 261.
- <sup>280</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 261.
- <sup>281</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262.
- <sup>282</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262.
- <sup>283</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262.
- <sup>284</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262.
- <sup>285</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 282.

- <sup>286</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 262.
- <sup>287</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 264.
- <sup>288</sup> Zerner, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's American Experiences. People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary," 282.
- <sup>289</sup> Josiah Ulysses Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998). For the following also see Robert Steiner, "No Difference in the Fare: Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the Problem of Racism," review, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 104 (July 1999): 83-85.
- <sup>290</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 4.
- <sup>291</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 6.
- <sup>292</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 15.
- <sup>293</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 12.
- <sup>294</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 12.
- <sup>295</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 15.
- <sup>296</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 14.
- <sup>297</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 16.
- <sup>298</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 16.
- <sup>299</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 16.
- <sup>300</sup> Young translates the German "Schranke" with barrier, and the German "Grenze" with limit. In my introduction I have argued for translating both German terms with "boundary."
- <sup>301</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 54.
- <sup>302</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 55.
- <sup>303</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 58.
- <sup>304</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 62.
- <sup>305</sup> Young explains: "He [Bonhoeffer] argues that being encompasses pre-reflective consciousness as well as reflective consciousness. In its prereflective mode, consciousness is drawn to someone spontaneously – turns to her as it were; and this immediate turning may be said to be an act – the reference to, the intentionality toward, what is other than the self. Even though consciousness and act operate closely together in this, Bonhoeffer makes it clear that consciousness is closer to being than to act. Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 72.
- <sup>306</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 73. Young explains: "There is no self-sufficiency in *actus directus*: Only when existence, supposed in permanent orientation to transcendence, is said not to be able to understand itself (or only to understand that it does not understand itself) is the true sense of the act expressed." Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>307</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>308</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>309</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>310</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 74.
- <sup>311</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 75. Young continues to observe: "As was the case with *The Communion of Saints*, I find that *Act and Being* makes it imperative for one to understand the difference between such metaphysics, tied as it is to European philosophy, and Bonhoeffer's Christian philosophy. European philosophy has legitimized, in fact, the racist attitudes Jordan explores in *White over Black*. For, as Cornel West brings out in his *Prophecy Deliverance*, Hume and Kant had looked on the Africans racist-ly ... That fact makes Bonhoeffer's revisiting of Germany's great philosophers in *Act and Being* fascinating, though he examined them primarily in order to expose the chimera, the fantasy, of human consciousness in which God is but a hypothesis. Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 75-76.
- <sup>312</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 82.
- <sup>313</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 83.
- <sup>314</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 83.
- <sup>315</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 86.
- <sup>316</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 87.
- <sup>317</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 127.

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<sup>318</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 127. Young explains: "This is why Bonhoeffer wrote that to know who Christ is is to know where he is. He stands for me, where I cannot stand; which 'brings out clearly that I am separated from my 'I,' ... by a boundary ... I am unable to cross ... This boundary – the *barrier!* – is grace: Bonhoeffer believed that Christ reminds us – until today – that we are fallen; and so he stands between us." Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 137.

<sup>319</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 136.

<sup>320</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 147.

<sup>321</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 148.

<sup>322</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 166.

<sup>323</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 170.

<sup>324</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism*, 170.

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